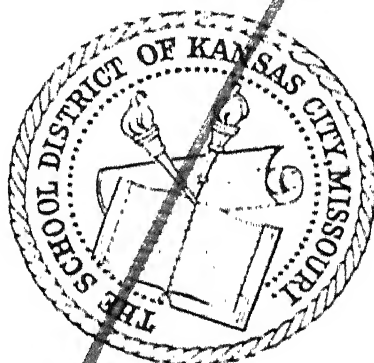


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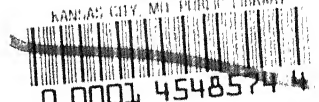
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A Literary History of the American People

VOLUME ONE

FROM 1607 TO THE BEGINNING
OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

A LITERARY HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

BY CHARLES ANGOFF

TWO VOLUMES IN ONE

VOLUME ONE:

*From 1607 to the Beginning
of the Revolutionary Period*

VOLUME TWO:

From 1750 to 1815

TUDOR PUBLISHING CO.

A LITERARY HISTORY
OF THE
AMERICAN PEOPLE

CHARLES ANGOFF

VOLUME ONE

FROM 1607
TO
THE BEGINNING
OF
THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

TUDOR PUBLISHING CO.
New York 1935

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NEW EDITION, 1935.

To the Memory of My Mother

ANNA ANGOLF

Who Died on August 28, 1929

A Literary History of the American People

P R E F A C E

This is the first volume in a prospective four-volume history of the literature of the American people. It covers the period from 1607, when Jamestown was founded, to approximately 1750, the beginning of the Revolutionary Era. The second carries the narrative to about 1815, when, for the first time, the United States became conscious of itself as a sovereign nation. The third will stop with 1899, when Frank Norris' "McTeague," the herald of modern American realism, appeared. I also plan to add a supplementary fourth volume, which will bring the story down to the present time.

My aim is to present a comprehensive literary history of the United States, to deal with every writer of any merit or influence whatsoever, to examine the changes in the reading habits of the people, and to try to explain the phenomena encountered in as plausible, detailed and inclusive a manner as possible. We all know what is meant by literature, though it would be senseless to attempt a definition of it that would satisfy everybody. On two of its characteristics there is universal agreement: a piece of writing to be worthy of the name, must have eloquence and it must have imaginative insight. This means simply that the author of it must have something to say, and that he must say it in a charming and persuasive way. That is all. The author's personal habits and private convictions are wholly irrelevant to the value of his work as belles-lettres.

Only when we attempt to explain its origin, in manner and matter, do we have a right to concern ourselves with such things. To explain here is to try to satisfy the normal human curiosity. But since human curiosity is boundless, no explanation is or ever can hope to be wholly satisfying. There are always a residual why? and how? Thus causality is as elusive a thing in literary criticism as it is in the fields of natural science and metaphysics. We can never escape the unknowable; we are always confronted in the end with an impenetrable Ding an sich. In this sense all literary phenomena

are mysteries. Poe and Whitman and Hawthorne and Clemens have been explained in terms of economics, psychology, physiology, morality, geography, and religion, yet they all have managed to extricate themselves from the explanation every time.

Nevertheless, despite their abiding mystery, much of what they did seems to give itself to rationalization. They were all Americans, and thus looked at the world in a way different from the way, say, of a Japanese. Poe was neurotic, and this surely had an affect on his choice of subject and his treatment of it. Hawthorne lived in a Puritanical society, and the fact helps to account for the bent his writing took. Victor Cousin, Sainte-Beuve, and Taine were thus quite sound in their theories; they erred simply in thinking that their explanations were the only ones. In attempting to account for the genesis of this or that American author or movement I shall make use of all personal, social and political facts that seem to me to be pertinent.

My main concern, however, will not be the reasons why a literary work or movement came to be, but rather its dignity and beauty as a work of art. The revolt against the impressionistic criticism of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries has led to the belief in some circles that the background of a work is the all-in-all. In the United States, indeed, there has of late arisen a school that would do away with æsthetic criticism completely. Its leader, Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, the Harvard historian, goes so far as to say: "The chief significance of the printed word arises from its use as a medium of communication among human beings, horizontally in its application to contemporary human society, vertically as applied to its transmission of knowledge from generation to generation. Writing from this point of view, no historian of American letters, however highly he might personally esteem Ralph Waldo Emerson, could treat the middle third of the Nineteenth Century without devoting considerably more space to the activities of H. McGuffey," whose school readers had a greater influence on general literary taste than "the entire Concord-Cambridge constellation."

To say this, it seems to me, is to confuse social history with literary history. Certainly the McGuffey readers should be the concern of the literary historian, for they shaped the reading habits of the people and were thus

a mighty force in the determination of the general culture, which, in turn, had an influence on contemporary belles-lettres. In other words, they formed a part of the background of the literature composed in their day. But the background, as Dr. Harry Hayden Clarke says in his excellent paper on "American Literary History and American Literature," "must not be allowed to obliterate the foreground . . . , the literature itself. . . . A comprehensive attempt to consider particularly all the forces playing in literature is one thing; an attempt to [write] . . . literature as history is another."¹ Literary history is not Kulturgeschichte. It is, to borrow a familiar thought from Anatole France, an adventure among and a search for masterpieces.

As to the determination of what are and what are not masterpieces, there have never been devised any purely logical standards. There are, in all probability, no such standards. In the nature of things there cannot be. Criticism is rationalized taste, and tastes differ, as everyone knows, among individuals and peoples. Persons of the same degree of intellectual and emotional maturity, to be sure, generally agree about the merit of a given work, but their reasons for their likes are not often unanimous. Instead, those reasons vary as their ratiotivative abilities and their sharpnesses of insight. All a critic can do is to state his likes and dislikes and his reasons for them, and try to persuade his audience to his own enthusiasm or contempt. At all times he must try to be fair with the author. He must judge him, in the words of Dr. J. E. Spingarn, solely on "what he has tried to express, and how he has expressed it. . . . The . . . intention must be judged at the moment of the creative act."

I have not appended a bibliography to this volume. There is an excellent and comprehensive one at the end of Volume I of "The Cambridge History of American Literature." All the important works since its publication appear in my footnotes. As for the quotations, I have followed the earliest obtainable editions faithfully in all particulars except in the matter of the long s, which I have put into modern form. All of my authorities and sources are stated in the text or the footnotes.

My indebtedness to Mr. H. L. Mencken is very great. He first suggested

¹ The whole essay appears in "The Reinterpretation of American Literature," edited by Norman Foerster. N. Y. 1928.

my writing this history, and has given generously of his counsel and encouragement. He has read the complete MS. of Volume I twice, and some parts of it three times, and has discussed the whole project with me innumerable times.

CHARLES ANGOFF

A Literary History of the American People

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CHAPTER I

The
Seventeenth Century

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A Literary History of the American People

The Seventeenth Century

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION PRODUCED NO literature at all, in the sense of *belles lettres*. There was a tremendous amount of writing done, in both prose and verse, but it was all pretty bad. Most of the prose was in the form of annals or sermons. They are of great historical and cultural interest and importance, but with hardly more than five exceptions they lack distinction either in thought or expression. A great many of them are scarcely intelligible. As for the verse, it was wholly rubbish. The founders of this country had among them not a few great men, and at least one genuinely profound thinker, Jonathan Edwards, but in the main they were not of sufficient culture to produce a literature.¹

The few of them who could read and write thought highly of their literary labors, and so did the first literary historians at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.² But with the emergence of a more vigorous, better informed and more intelligent criticism the early writings began to be judged for what they really were. The first prominent man of letters to cast a doubt on the early over-indulgent evaluations was the Rev. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, the foe of Poe. His "Curiosities of American Literature" and "Prose Writers of America," published in 1845 and 1846 respectively, contained the first intelligent studies of the early American literature made up to his day.³ A little more

¹ "The First Americans," by Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker. N. Y. 1927. Especially Chapters I and II. See also "Intercolonial Aspects of American Culture on the Eve of the Revolution," by Michael Kraus. The Columbia University Press. 1928. The Introduction.

² Good specimens of the preposterous praise accorded American literati at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century are to be found in "Specimens of American Poetry with Critical and Biographical Notices," by Samuel Kettell. 3 vols. Boston. 1829; and "Lectures on American Literature," by Samuel L. Knapp. Boston. 1829. See especially the latter, pp. xlvii and 226-230.

³ Griswold was surely not the first American critic, and neither was he a particularly brilliant one, though far abler than is generally believed. The *North American Review* was full of

than forty years afterward there appeared a still severer literary revisionist. He was Charles F. Richardson, author of a two-volume history of "American Literature: 1607-1885." He said:

English literature from 1607 to 1776 passed from one brilliant period to another; the American Colonies were in constant communication with the old home. If we think of Shakespeare, Bunyan, Milton, the Seventeenth Century choir of lyrists, Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Addison, Swift, Dryden, Gray, Goldsmith, and the Eighteenth Century novelists, what shall we say of the intrinsic literary worth of most of the books written on our soil, by writers who inherited, or shared, the intellectual life of England? . . . Why should writings which would have passed into obscurity in England be magnified beyond their deserts, merely because they were written on the American Coast? ¹

He continued thus:

The history of literature is one thing, bibliography is quite another thing. . . . One should study the great men profoundly, and let the worthy sermonizers and pamphleteers and spinners of doggerel go free. Our forefathers were founding a state on the basis of the town meeting; they were spreading Christianity as they understood it, with might and main; they were opening schools and creating a virtuous and manly public spirit; but for literature as such most of them cared little. They made literature possible; but they do not deserve, in the chronicles of literature, a disproportionate space.²

Barrett Wendell was of the same opinion. In "A Literary History of America" he said that "we can instantly perceive that only the . . . Americans of the Nineteenth Century have produced literature of any importance."³ William P. Trent went even further when he remarked that "it would be hard to imagine a more hopeless literature from the

critical writing almost from its beginning in 1815. But most of it dealt with strictly English literature. Griswold was the first American critic to devote himself almost exclusively to native American literature. See "American Literary Criticism," selected and edited by William Morton Payne. N. Y. 1904; introduction.

¹ *Op. cit.* Vol. I. p. xvii.

² *Ibid.* pp. xvii-xix.

³ "A Literary History of America," by Barrett Wendell. N. Y. 1900. p. 9.

point of view of intrinsic æsthetic value . . . than the body of writings produced in the American Colonies before the Revolution.”¹ He added that the only period he could think of in the history of English literature to compare with it in desolation was that between 1050 and 1200.

The critical world of today is inclined to agree with these judgments of Richardson, Wendell and Trent; the more conservative view held by the editors of “The Cambridge History of American Literature” is surely a minority opinion.² It is, indeed, difficult to see how any critic of sound taste unperverted by false patriotism could think otherwise. The majority of the Seventeenth Century American writers were mere annalists, and very bad ones. Captain John Smith was a man of sound practical sense and well fitted to serve as leader of the Virginia Colony in the first few months of its founding, but he wrote atrociously. He knew very little about spelling and almost nothing about English grammar. The virility and simplicity of his style, so fondly described by the older historians, are largely imaginary. And what was true of him was just as true of such smaller fry as George Percy, John Pory and William Wood. It was also true of such revered Fathers as John Winthrop and William Bradford. Their writings have value solely because they contain historical material not to be found elsewhere. As *belles lettres* they have no merit whatever. It would be preposterous to speak of them in the same breath with Xenophon’s “Anabasis” or Thucydides’ “History of the Peloponnesian War” or even David Hume’s “History of England.” The same must be said of the colonial narrators of Indian captivities and atrocities, such as Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, John Gyles, Jonathan Dickenson and Alice Curwen. Professor George Parker Winship’s opinion that “there is nothing in English, or in any other language, that surpasses the narratives of Indian captivities in vividness or in the bare statement of physical suffering and of mental torment”³ must be considered as a wish rather than a sober critical judgment.

As for the theological writers, whose number was almost as great as that of the annalists, they were all men of remarkable character and amazing industry, and they undoubtedly did a great deal to foster learning in the Colonies, though it was learning of a wrong kind. But even as theological scholars they were not distinguished. Put beside

¹ “A History of American Literature: 1607-1865,” by William P. Trent. N. Y. 1903. p. 1.

² “The Cambridge History of American Literature.” Vol. I. p. 6.

³ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. x.

their contemporaries in England — George Berkeley, Richard Sibbes, John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Thomas Adams, Richard Baxter and Matthew Henry, all rigorous thinkers — they shone but feebly. Cotton Mather, as I shall show later, was rather widely read in England and on the Continent, but the learned world was far from considering him a giant. So also in the case of Jonathan Edwards, a man of far greater intellectual powers. Edwards remains one of the supreme tragedies in the history of American culture. Were it not for his theological disease he probably would have become one of the greatest thinkers of his time, a worthy contemporary of Hume, Leibnitz and even Kant. Instead he outcalvined Calvin, and it will probably not be long before he sinks in esteem to the level of the Mathers.

In the realm of pure literature Anne Bradstreet was once given a high place, though of late there has been a tendency to rate her somewhat lower. In her day and for a century and a quarter thereafter she was regarded as one of the glories of American verse. But the truth is that she was not a poet at all. She was merely a theologically minded lady possessed of a gift for jingling. If she had any influence on the national letters at all it was in the direction of misleading and debauching the poets who came after her. Michael and Samuel Wigglesworth, Nicholas Noyes and William Morrell, her most prominent rivals, wrote such dreadful verse that in little more than two generations after their deaths they were given a critical funeral.

It is therefore only by politeness that we can speak of literature in the first one hundred and fifty years of the history of the United States. We really had no literature then. Why this was so it is difficult to determine. The England of the time, as Barrett Wendell has pointed out, was glorying in what was perhaps the noblest period in the entire history of her literature. In the first decade of the Seventeenth Century there had already been presented plays by Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, Dekker, John Lyly, Middleton, Marston, Heywood and Chapman. Four famous translations were already completed: Fairfax's of Tasso, Lodge's of Josephus, Florio's of Montaigne, and Shelton's of "Don Quixote." And there had just been run off the press "England's Helicon," Camion's "Art of English Poetry," Davidson's "Poetical Rhapsody," and Hakluyt's "Voyages." In the middle of the century there appeared works by Herrick, Fuller, Milton, Spenser, Lovelace, Francis Quarles, Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, Bunyan, Hobbes, Bacon, Cowley, Davenant, Vaughan, George Herbert and Izaak Walton. Toward the end of the century there were plays by Southern, Congreve, Colley

Cibber, Farquhar and Vanbrugh, and other works by Bentley, Blackmore, Defoe, Evelyn, Lord Shaftesbury, Dryden and Garth. The final version of the Bible was already completed, and so were Tate and Brady's version of the Psalms, Raleigh's "History of the World," Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," and Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici." What did the Colonies produce to compare with all these works? "The Travels of Captain John Smith," "The Four Elements," by Anne Bradstreet, the "Magnalia Christi Americana," by Cotton Mather, "The Day of Doom, or, A Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment" and the Bay Psalm Book, the last containing the most dreadful verse ever perpetrated in the English language by mature and learned men.

How account for this? Some have argued that the tumult and strife of early colonial times prevented the growth of *belles lettres*. But this hardly explains. Some of the greatest literature of the world has been composed in the midst of the most intense political and social commotions. The finest philosophical thought and the highest reaches of the fine arts in Greece were achieved in Athens' most turbulent period, and in Rome some of the best authors were Senators who took an active part in the politics of their time. When we come to England we find that Milton lived in the Commonwealth and participated in violent political discussions. So, in their day, did the blind Mæonides, Camoëns, Dante and Tasso. Others have argued that the reason for the lack of literature in the Seventeenth Century is to be found in the absence of a leisure class. This simply is not true. As I shall show in the section on early Virginia history there *was* a leisure class, at least, in the Southern Colonies, and many of its members were so well-to-do that they had Summer homes in London, and sent their children to English finishing schools.

The fact was that despite all their hardships the colonists wrote voluminously — letters home, annals, sermons, public tracts, and verse. More theological works were probably written in the Seventeenth Century in ratio to population than in any other period in the history of the country. And nearly everybody wrote verse. It was a common thing to intersperse personal letters with doggerel, and to do the same thing with histories and sermons. But the literary merit of all this scribbling was practically nothing. The times were, in theory, of precisely the nature required for high literary endeavor — great deeds were on every side —, but as Professor Leon Kellner has said, "We seek in vain for an epic that glorifies those great deeds; for a historical

production that does justice to those conquerors and pathfinders of heroic proportions. . . ."¹

Professor Kellner probably hit upon the most plausible reason for the vacuum when he said, that "absorption in God seems incompatible with the presentation of mankind. . . . The inspired moments of the loftiest souls [of colonial times] were filled with the thought of God and His designs."² The Puritan Fathers, in fact, were the most fanatical of all the English Puritans, and the free environment they encountered in this country made them even more austere than they had been at home. The English Puritans were obstructed on every side by a more civilized sentiment, and thus their influence on the culture of the land was of short duration. But in this country there was no hindrance of any kind, and the result was a Puritan infiltration into the national culture of which we are not yet rid. The Fathers were opposed to all forms of æsthetic pleasure, even of the most paltry kind. Nearly all the divines of the Seventeenth Century delivered sermons on the hellishness of the custom of wearing long hair among men. Christmas, as is well known, was a day of penitence in New England. As a result of this group mind, the poetry of the time was, in large part, simply versified hell theology. Even Anne Bradstreet, who occasionally forgot herself long enough to sing the praises of her husband, never lost sight of her sins and the torment that awaited her if she did not mend her ways. She was forever thanking God for being merciful to her.

Professor Kellner thinks that all this explains the lack of literature only in the Northern Colonies. He is at a loss to explain a similar lack in the South. Perhaps it can be found in the following two causes. First, despite the legend to the contrary, there was nearly as much of the Puritan spirit in the South as there was in the North. The Virginians, for example, did not pray so earnestly and at such great length as the inhabitants of Boston and Salem, but they were not less guilty of religious intolerance. They tortured quite as many witches as the Salem fanatics, and they harassed dissenters quite as barbarously. They made it very unsafe for Quakers and Baptists to be in their midst. "Indeed," as Professor Moses Coit Tyler says, "religious persecution remained rampant and flourishing in Virginia long after it had died of its own shame in New England."³ The laws against

¹ "American Literature," by Leon Kellner. N. Y. 1915. p. 6.

² *Ibid.* pp. 7-8.

³ "A History of American Literature During the Colonial Period," by Moses Coit Tyler. N. Y. 1887. Vol. I. p. 91. See also "The First Americans," by T. J. Wertenbaker. N. Y. 1928. p. 3 ff.

blasphemy, breaking the Sabbath, and refusing to go to church were very severe. Morning and evening prayer were compulsory, and the third conviction of blasphemy was punishable by death. A third conviction of breaking the Sabbath was also punishable by death.¹

In the second place, the majority of the early settlers of Virginia and the other Southern Colonies were illiterate wastrels, runaway convicts, or paupers. The legend that they were Cavaliers of noble blood has been proven to be wrong. Captain John Smith, who knew them well, exclaimed in disgust, "thirty of the best only, preserved in Christianitie, by their industrie are as good as 200 of these idlers."²

The Colonists called the Indians savages, but the fact is that the red men were in the possession of a culture, and especially a literature, far above that current among the whites. Recent research has shown that their poetry was of a very high order, so high, in fact, that few modern American poets can rival it in depth and vigor of feeling.³ The immigrant Englishmen might profitably have spent their time trying to imitate these Indian poets instead of the saccharine Du Bartas.

It is thus a question whether it is worth while to write the history of colonial literature, since there really was none. Next to nothing written in that time was of any appreciable æsthetic merit. Several among the older literary historians — and the author of the two massive volumes entitled "A History of American Literature During the Colonial Period" must be counted among them —, though they were well-informed men and of sound critical sense, were duped into taking the writing of the time seriously because, in their day, there was so little genuine American literature to write about.⁴ But as time goes on and this country takes an equal place with the nations of the Continent in the realm of *belles lettres*, the scribbling of the first 125 years will be relegated more and more to the background, to take its place finally in a brief and apologetic introductory chapter. In the meantime it is necessary to treat it at greater length, if only to prove its badness.

¹ See "For the Colony in Virginea Brittania. Lawes, Diuine, Morall and Martiall, etc.," by William Strachey. Force's Collection of Historical Tracts. Vol. III. No. 2.

² "Travels and Works of Captain John Smith: President of Virginia, and Admiral of New England: 1580-1631," edited by Edward Arber. A New Edition with a Biographical Introduction by A. G. Bradley. London 1852. p. 84.

³ The first comprehensive work on this subject was "Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States," by Henry R. Schoolcraft. More recent studies are contained in Dr. Paul Radin's two books, "Primitive Man as Philosopher" (N. Y. 1927) and "The American Indian" (N. Y. 1925). I discuss the matter at length later.

⁴ For a similar opinion see "History of American Verse: 1610-1897," by James L. Onderdonck. Chicago. 1901. pp. 32-33. See also W. P. Trent's memorial essay on M. C. Tyler in the *Forum*, August, 1901, especially pp. 754-755.

CHAPTER II

The South

Virginia

Before the Revolution

CHAPTER II

Virginia *Before the Revolution*

UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE THE REVOLUTION THE AMERICAN COLONIES were isolated from one another politically, socially, economically and culturally. They were, indeed, separate local seats of English civilization in America. The Northern Colonies, of course, had something in common: they were nearly all populated by Puritan émigrés. The Southern Colonies also had something in common: they were nearly all populated by fortune seekers. But that is as far as the community of life went in either case. The laws in the various settlements were radically different, and so were the moneys, the systems of education, the prevailing religious practices, and the means of amusement. It is thus necessary, in part, to treat the Colonies separately when discussing their literatures, though we shall see that they had much more in common in this respect than in any other.

Since Virginia was the first permanent English settlement in North America, and since the first book in American literature is generally thought to have been written there, it is perhaps well to study its early contributions to the national letters first. In order to understand the subject we must first take a glance at the history of the Colony. Virginia was founded on May 14, 1607. On that day 120 immigrants, transported by the Virginia Company of London, organized by Sir Thomas Smith, settled at Jamestown. By September of the same year about half of them had died of disease and starvation. Naturally, great dissatisfaction arose among those left, and before long there was a general mutiny against the authorities. In all probability they would have perished like their brethren if it had not been for the sagacity of Captain John Smith, who was appointed head of the local government in September, 1608. He compelled the colonists to submit to the law of the land, and to help the peace he built for them a church. What is more important he set them to work tilling the soil and catching fish. He invaded the camps of the Indians and bartered with them

for corn and meat. An accident soon forced him to leave for England, and almost immediately bad times again descended upon the colonists. The Winter of 1609, known as the Starving Time in contemporary accounts, saw them reduced from 500 to 60 in less than six months.

At the beginning the government was in the hands of the Virginia (originally London) Company, which delegated the actual administrative work to a Governor and Council. In 1621 a constitution was granted the Colony, whereby the Virginia Company, as before, appointed a Governor and council, and the people chose annually delegates to the House of Burgesses. Several of the early Governors, among them Captain Samuel Argall, Edward Diggs, Richard Bennett and Samuel Mathews, were rigid Puritans, who compelled the colonists, on the pain of death, to accept the doctrine of the trinity, respect the authority of the Bible and attend church. By 1660, when the population had risen to about 20,000, the authority of both houses had become centered in a few leading families, and thus a privileged class was created.

Unlike the New Englanders, the Virginians did not settle in groups of families, villages and neighborhoods, but rather in detached establishments forming individualized domestic centers.¹ As a result, the play of mind on mind, so common in Boston, Salem, and Hartford, was completely lacking, and the Virginian culture, what there was of it, was much inferior to that of the Northern Colonies. This isolation also greatly influenced the social life.

Routine weighed so heavily on their lonely hours that every opportunity for a joyful rebound from the sapping tedium of rural life was eagerly seized. Guests and travelers — especially wayfarers bringing news from the outside world — were treated like princes, the revels of gay parties affording an outlet for the pent-up emotions of dull days. Moreover, in the South Sunday was Sunday, not the Sabbath of Puritan holiness; if all persons were supposed to be in their place at the parish church for the appointed services, the ban on solemnity, according to the Anglican and Catholic custom, was lifted when devotions were over. The planting section was, therefore, a land of "good living," that is, for the owners of large domains, mansions and slaves.²

¹ "The History of the United States," by George Bancroft. Boston. 1890. Vol. II. p. 212.

² "The Rise of American Civilization," by Charles A. and Mary R. Beard. N. Y. 1928. Vol. I. p. 141.

Though the social life of Virginia, and of the rest of the South for that matter, was thus mainly rural, there were a few localities where an urban society flourished. Jamestown, for instance, was, for a time, a center of pleasure-loving people, though Charleston was soon far ahead of it in that respect. There music and plays were enjoyed, and also lectures by visiting Oxonians. Educationally, however, Virginia was considerably behind all the Northern Colonies. The instruction of the youth was mainly in the hands of well-meaning but, for the most part, ignorant clergymen. The Presbyterians, who were officially recognized in the State under the Toleration Act of 1699, had decades before spread their missionaries through the Colony, and were the only educators of any sort for some time. The Established Church took very little interest in education. It was extremely lax in its morals, and in its interest in the welfare of the people.

The elements of reading and writing were the only secular subjects taught by Presbyterian missionaries. Little more, indeed, was taught at the College of William and Mary. Through the greater part of the first century of its existence it was a mere boarding school. It gave no courses in Greek or Latin, or in the higher mathematics or ancient history. The fact is that the ruling families did not want anything better, or even as good. The idea of a college was presented for discussion in the Old Dominion as early as 1617, but the Governors frowned upon it. It was not until 1693 that the William and Mary was founded, due in the main to the efforts of the Rev. James Blair. It is related that when he went to the attorney-general to ask for a collegiate charter and argued that the souls of the Virginians had to be cared for, he was greeted with the exclamation, "Damn their souls! Let them make tobacco."¹

There was a great social distance between the rich planters and their families and the masses, and also between the small farmers and the Negroes. The greater part of the lower orders was composed of industrious and ambitious, though often illiterate, freeholders and free artisans and laborers. They were housed in wretched huts, and were held in contempt by the dominant families. But they were jealous of their rights. It was they who instigated the Bacon Rebellion, and it was they who spilled most of the blood in the Revolution.

Unlike in New England, where the dominant class was made up principally of rich merchants who were content to remain merchants, the upper class in Virginia and in the other Colonies below the

¹ Quoted in "The Rise of American Civilization." Vol. I. p. 168.

Potomac, though composed of the same type of persons, at once set to aping the ways of the English land-barons. They looked down upon the less fortunate of their brethren who remained small land-owners or mere artisans. They sent their children to Oxford and did all in their power to stave off the growth of popular education. Soon they assumed the name and style of Cavaliers, and their descendants to this day have gloried in the tradition of their Cavalier blood started in so meretricious a fashion. It is only recently that this tradition has been exploded by the labors of Professor T. J. Wertenbaker of Princeton. He made an investigation of all the known Virginian genealogical tables, and came to the conclusion that "a careful collection of the names of the Cavaliers who were prominent enough to find a place in the records show that their number was insignificant." He found only three families in all Virginia "derived from English houses of historic note" and "three more that sprang from the minor gentry."¹

There is another false legend current regarding Virginia and the other Southern Colonies. It is that the spirit of Puritanism was absent from them. It is true that the Virginians were not as interested in the state of their souls and in the topography of Hell as their Northern brethren. It is true that they danced, flirted and drank more openly than the Bostonians. But they were just as intolerant of dissenters from the Established Church and from the spirit and letter of the Bible as the Bostonians of the most fanatical period. "Delights of the flesh and skepticism in religion," say Dr. and Mrs. Charles A. Beard, "even the faintest, were condemned with equal severity in Virginia and Massachusetts."²

¹ Quoted in "The Rise of American Civilization," Vol. I. p. 128. I am indebted to the same authors for the rest of the paragraph, which I have transcribed almost verbatim.

² *Ibid.* p. 139. See also the colonial body of laws entitled, "For the Colony in Virginia Britannia. Laws Divine, Morall and Martiall, etc.," as amended by William Strachey in 1612. Force's Collection of Historical Tracts. Vol. III. No. 2.

CHAPTER III

The South

*The Annalists of Virginia
in the Seventeenth Century*

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I. CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH

THE EARLY SETTLERS OF VIRGINIA, LIKE THE EARLY SETTLERS in all the other Colonies, wrote books not because they harbored any love for beautiful letters, but for definite practical purposes. A large part of them may be classified in these six divisions: (1) pamphlets and letters of news regarding themselves and their new home, sent to friends and relatives in England; (2) requests for legal decisions in the courts of the motherland; (3) appeals for more settlers, and replies to the charges against the settlements published by disgruntled colonists who returned home; (4) pamphlets and letters describing the Indians, a subject of great interest in England; (5) pamphlets and letters in praise of the natural environment in the Colony; and (6) pamphlets and books discussing its government and the religion and habits of its people. These categories, it will be observed, include only material sent to people back home. But a still larger portion of the current writing was composed for the people here, and was made up of sermons, histories, poetry, and so on.

Let us first consider the histories, or, to be more correct, the annals. Preëminent among them in both time and interest, and perhaps historical value also, stand the works of Captain John Smith. He has been called everything from a liar to a traitor,¹ but he remains one of the most picturesque characters produced by the English-speaking world in the Seventeenth Century. The date of his birth is unknown, but it is on record that he was baptized on January 9, 1590 (modern reckoning) at Willoughby, Lincolnshire. He was the son of a tenant

¹ His most ardent defender against these charges is Edward Arber, who has written voluminously about him. His most bitter critic is Lewis I. Kropf: "Captain John Smith of Virginia." *London Notes and Queries*. 1890. 7th series. For a more reasoned opinion on the controversy see "Captain John Smith and His Duties," by Charles Poindexter. Richmond, Va. 1893, especially pp. 103-113.

farmer and received his early and only formal education in the county grammar schools. At an early age he fled to Paris, and became a soldier of fortune. It is related that his constant companions were a copy of Marcus Aurelius and a copy of Machiavelli's "Art of War." He soon drifted to Eastern Europe, where he served in the wars against the Turks. In his account of this period he tells of many highly colorful experiences, among them the killing of three Turks successively in single combat, and his escape from Turkish captivity, after slaughtering the man to whom he had been sold as a slave.

Returning to England, he joined the hundred-odd men and women who left for America in January, 1607. On the voyage Smith had a quarrel with the commanders of the expedition, and as a result was put in chains until the arrival in Virginia, when it was discovered by the sealed instructions to be opened over here that he was named as one of the Council, so he was let free. These first settlers, who were mainly "exiles, superfluous, soft-handed sons of small squires," came over primarily in search of gold, and when they found none they began to grumble. Being lazy, they lolled about, doing nothing, and it was not long before seventy-five of them died of sickness and starvation. It was in these circumstances that Smith, a man of great industry and resourcefulness, assumed the leadership. In the Autumn of 1607 he was given charge of the supplies of the Colony, and showed great ability in obtaining food from the Indians. In December of the same year, while on one of his explorations among the Indians, he was captured by Chief Powhatan, and, according to a familiar legend, would have had his brains knocked out had it not been for the intervention of the King's daughter, Pocahontas. This Pocahontas story was generally believed until 1859, when, due primarily to the researches of Dr. Charles Deane of Cambridge, Mass., it was noticed that in all versions of Smith's "True Relation" of 1608 no mention whatever is made of the episode, and that the only reference to it is in his "General History of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles."

Upon his return to Jamestown, after his release by Powhatan, Smith was arrested by the Council, charged with the responsibility for the death of two men killed at the time of the capture, and sentenced to hang. He was saved only by Captain Newport, who had just arrived with the second supply of settlers for the Colony, and who espoused Smith's cause. Smith was restored to his seat in the Council, and on September 10, 1608, was elected its president. The following Winter the colonists experienced their hardest times, and over half of them

perished. Had it not been for Smith's enterprise in his negotiations with the Indians all of them, very likely, would have died of want and disease. In the meantime he was pestered by the officers of the Virginia Company for gold and furs, and it was in reply to them that he wrote some of his most effective papers.

At the end of his year's term of office he left for England, because of a serious injury suffered in the accidental explosion of a bag of gunpowder. In 1613 he set sail to explore New England, a name he coined himself, with instructions from the Virginia Company to find gold, kill whales and collect furs. He returned in six months, without gold, whales or furs — but with careful surveys and maps of the land, which proved of the greatest value to the Pilgrim Fathers. In recognition of these services he was given the title Admiral of New England, which he always appended to his later writings. He never revisited North America, but spent the rest of his days recording his experiences. He died in 1631.

Smith spent a little more than two years on this Continent, and it is thus a question whether he may rightly be considered an American author. But the older historians were probably correct in so counting him. After all, the major portion of his writings, and those for which he is remembered, deal with his experiences in this land, and he possesses the distinction of having been the first colonist to write about the New World. He wrote six books about his American experiences. The earliest of these, "A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of noate as hath hapned in Virginia since the first planting of that Collony," published in London in 1608, was, as I have said, the first printed account of the James river settlement. Historically, it is still of great value. It describes the country, the first kindnesses of the Indians, the later battles with them, the internal quarrels, and the famine and sickness suffered by the colonists. It is in this book that he gives the first description of King Powhatan, and it is here that he achieves one of his few really articulate and effective passages:

Arriuing at Weramocomoco their Emperour proudly lying vppon a Bedstead a foote high, vppon tenne or twelue Mattes, richly hung with manie Chaynes of great Pearles about his necke, and couered with a great Couering of *Rahaughoums*. At his head sat a woman, at his left another; on each side sitting vppon a Matte vppon the ground, were raunged his chiefe men on each side the fire, tenne in a ranke, and behinde them as many young women,

each (with) a great chaine of white beades ouer their shoulders, their heades painted in redde: and [Powhatan] with such a graue and Maiesticall countenance, as drue me into admiration to see such state in a naked Saluage.¹

Smith's second book, "A Map of Virginia, With a Description of the Covntrey, the Commodities, People, Government and Religion," published in London in 1612, is perhaps best described by the subtitle: "Wherevnto Is Annexed The Proceedings of those Colonies, since their first departure from England, with the discources, Orations and relations of the Salvages, and the accidents that befell them in all their Iournies and discoveries." The book is divided into two parts. Smith wrote only the first part; the second is a compilation by other hands. A good portion of his part he devotes to a description of the geography of the land. "The mildnesse of the aire," he says,

the fertilitie of the soile, and the situation of the rivers are so propitious to the nature and vse of man as no place is more convenient for pleasure, profit and mans sustenance. Vnder that latitude or climat, here will liue any beasts, as horses, goats, sheep, asses, hens, &c as appeared by them that were carried thither. The waters, Isles, and shoals, are full of safe harbours for ships of warre or marchandize, for boats of all sortes, for transportation or fishing, &c. The Bay and riuers haue much marchandable fish and places fit for Salt coats, building of ships, making of iron, &c.²

He also gives considerable space to a description of the Indians. Here, as in the "True Relation," he shows his best powers when writing about Powhatan, who, he relates,

is of personage a tall well proportioned man, with a sower looke; his head somewhat gray, his beard so thinne that it seemeth none at all. His age near 60; of a very able and hardy body to endure any labour. About his person ordinarily attendeth a guard of 40 or 50 of the tallest men his Country doth afford. Every night vppon the 4 quarters of his hovse are 4 Sentinels, each standing from other a flight shoot: and at every half houre, one from the

¹ "Travels and Works of Captain John Smith: President of Virginia and Admiral of New England, 1580-1631," edited by Edward Arber. A new edition with a biographical and critical introduction by A. G. Bradley. London. 1852. 2 vols. Vol. I. p. 19. All further quotations in this section are from this edition.

² *Ibid.* Vol. I. pp. 63-64.

Corps du guard doth hollowe; vnto whom every Sentinell doth answer round from his stand. If any fail, they presently send forth an officer that beateth him extreemely. A mile from Orapakes in a thicket of wood, he hath a house in which he keepeth his kind of Treasure, as skinnes, copper, pearle, and beades; which he storeth vp against the time of his death and buriall. Here also is his store of red paint for ointment, and bowes and arrowes. This house is 50 or 60 yards in length, frequented only by Priests. At the 4 corners of his house stand 4 Images as Sentinels; one of a Dragon, another a Beare, the 3 like a Leopard, and the fourth like a giant-like man: all made euil favordly, according to their best workmanship. He hath as many women as will: whereof when he lieth on his bed, one sitteth at his head, and another at his feet; but when he sitteth, one sitteth on his right hand, and another on his left. As he is weary of his women, hee bestoweth them on those that best deserue them at his hands. When he dineth or supbeth, one of his women, before and after meat, bringeth him water in a woden platter to wash his hands. Another waiteth with a bunch of feathers to wipe them instead of a Towell, and the feathers when he hath wiped are dried againe.¹

Captain Smith's third book is entitled "A Description of New England," and was published in London in 1616. It does for New England what the "True Relation" and "A Map of Virginia" did for that Colony. It is the least quoted of his books; nevertheless it is the best, from the points of view of accuracy, grace and clarity of writing, and effectiveness. It proved of inestimable value to the Pilgrim Fathers four years later. There are passages in it which, despite their clumsiness, achieve a certain nobility, and lead one to think that had Captain Smith been more literate, he probably would have produced lasting literature. Here, for example, is his appeal for more settlers to come to this Continent:

Who can desire more content, that hath small meanes; or but only his merit to aduance his fortune, then to tread, and plant that ground hee hath purchased by the hazard of his life! If he haue but the taste of virtue and magnanimitie, what to such a minde can be more pleasant, then planting and building a foundation for his Posteritie, gotte from the rude earth, by Gods blessing and his owne industrie, without preiudice to any! If hee

¹ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 80.

haue any graine or faith or zeale in Religion, what can he doe less hurtful to any; or more agreeable to God, then to seeke to convert those poor Saluages to know Christ, and humanitie, whose labors with discretion will triple requite they charge and paines! *What so truely sutes with honour and honestie as the discovering things vnkowne?* erecting Townes, peopling Countries, informing the ignorant, reforming things uniust, teaching virtue; and gaine to our Natiue mother-countrie a kingdom to attend her: find imployment for those that are idle, because they know not what to doe: . . . ?

Consider: What were the beginnings and endings of the monarkies of the *Chaldeans*, the *Syrians*, the *Grecians*, and *Romans*, but this one rule: What was it they would not doe, for the good commonwealth, or their Mother-citie? For example: *Rome*, What made her such a Monarchesse, but onely the aduentures of her youth, not in riot at home; but in dangers abroad? and the iustice and iudgement out of their experience, when they grewe aged. What was ruine and hurt but this; The excesse of idlenesse, the fondnesse of Parents, the want of experience in Magistrates, the admiration of their undeserved honours, their politicke incredulities, their hypocriticall seeming goodnesse, and their deeds of secret lewdness? . . . Then, who would liue at home idly (or thinke in himselfe any worth to liue) onely to eate, drink, and sleepe, and so die? Or by consuming that carelessly, his friends got worthily? Or by using that miserably, that maintained vertue honestly? Or for being descended nobly, pine with the vaine vaunt of great kindred, in penurie? Or (to maintaine a silly shewe of brauery) toyle out thy heart, soule, and time, basely; by shifts, tricks, cards, and dice? Or by relating newes of others actions, sharke here or there for a dinner, or supper; deceiue thy friends, by faire promises and dissimulation, in borrowing where thou neuer intendest to pay; offend the lawes, surfeit with excesse, burden thy Country, abuse thy selfe, despaire in want, and then couzen thy kindred, yea even thine own brother, and wish thy parents death (I will not say damnation) to haue their estates? though thou seest what honours, and rewards, the world yet hath for them (who) will seeke them and worthily deserue them.¹

¹ "Travels and Works of Captain John Smith: President of Virginia and Admiral of New England, 1580-1631," edited by Edward Arber. A new edition with a biographical and critical introduction by A. G. Bradley. London. 1852. 2 vols. Vol. I. pp. 208-210.

Captain Smith wrote three more books dealing with colonial America: "The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and The Summer Isles," "New England Trials," and "The True Travels, Adventures and Observations of Captaine Iohn Smith, In Europe, Asia, Africa and America, from Anno Domini 1593 to 1629." They are of small value, even historically. They are all made up of rewritten extracts from his previous books or from the writings of others. They were apparently done in great haste, for they are, in most part, so ungrammatical and obscure that it is often impossible to get any meaning from them.

2. GEORGE PERCY

After Smith, and, in fact, during his lifetime, there were many other annalists. None of them approached him in the fullness of his observations, or even in his modest attainments in diction. But the writings of two of them take rank with his in historical importance. They are "Discourse of the Plantation of the Southern Colony in Virginia by the English," by George Percy, and "A Discourse of Virginia," by Edward Maria Wingfield. George Percy lived in the years 1580-1632. He was the eighth son of Henry Percy, the eighth earl of Northumberland. In 1606 he sailed with the first expedition to Virginia, and was the Governor of that Colony after the departure of Smith in September, 1609. He returned to England in April, 1612. He was a well-educated Englishman, and had done considerable traveling, but he wrote abominably, and at no time rose to the heights of passion, however inarticulate, of Smith. His voyage over here was full of exciting experiences, but they apparently moved him but little. Here, for example, is his description of it, after his ship had left the West Indies, whither it had first wandered:

The tenth day we set saile, and disimboged out of the *West Indies*, and bare our course Northerly. The fourteenth day we passed the Tropick of *Cancer*. The one and twentieth day, about five a clocke at night there began a vehement tempest, which lasted all the night, and winds, raine, and thunders in a terrible manner. We were forced to lie at Hull that night, because wee thought wee had been nearer land than we were. The next

morning, being the two and twentieth day we sounded: and the three and twentieth and foure and twentieth day, but we could find no ground. The five and twentieth day we sounded, and had no ground at an hundred fathom. The six and twentieth day of April about foure a clocke in the morning, wee descried the Land of *Virginia*: the same day wee entred into the Bay of Chesupioc directly, without any let or hindrance; there wee landed and discovered a little way, but we could find nothing worth the speaking of, but faire meddowes and goodly tall Trees, with such Fresh-waters running through the woods, as I was almost ravished at the first sight thereof.

At night, when we were going abroad the same the Savages creeping upon all foure, from the Hilles like Beares, with their Bowes in their mouthes, charged us desperately in the faces, hurt Captaine Gabrill Archer in both his hands, and a sayler in two places of the body very dangerous. After they had spent their Arrowes, and felt the sharpnesse of our shot, they retired into the Woods with a great noise and so left us.¹

3. EDWARD MARIA WINGFIELD

Edward Maria Wingfield was a member of the Virginia Colony at the same time as George Percy. He, too, came of a distinguished family, and was the godson of Cardinal Pole and Queen Mary Tudor, from the latter of whom he derived his middle name. He was president of the Colony for a time, and in that capacity aroused the animosity of the other settlers, and was finally deposed. His "A Discourse of Virginia" is valuable chiefly for the picture it gives of the life of his time. He was probably a man of much worldly experience, but, though well-educated, found great difficulty in writing clear and effective English. Concerning the accusations brought against him by the Council he wrote thus:

The 11th of September, I was sent for to come before the President and Councill upon their Court daie. They had now made Mr. Archer, Recorder of Virginia. The President made a speeche

¹ "The Founding of Jamestown, Percy's Discourse of Virginia," edited by Albert Bushnell Hart and Edward Channing. The American Historical Leaflets. No. 36. pp. 6-7.

to the Collony, that he thought it fitt to acquaint them whie I was deposed. . . .

First, Master President said that I had denyed him a penny whitle, a chickyn, a spoonful of beere, and served him with foule corne; and wth that pulled some graine out of a bagg, shewing it to the company. . . .

Mr. Martyn followed wth, 'He reporteth that I doe slack the service in the Collonye, and doe nothing but tend pott, spitt, and oven; but he hath starved my sonne, and denyed him a spoonful of beere. I haue friends in England shall be reuenged on him, if ever he come to London.¹

He continues to enumerate the charges:

It is noysed that I combyned with the Spanniards to the distruction of the Collony: That I ame an Atheist, because I carried not a Bible with me, and because I did forbid the preacher to preache: that I affected a Kingdome; That I did hide of the common prouision in the ground.²

He defends himself in this manner:

Two or three sundaye mornings, the Indians gaue vs allarums at our towne. By that tymes they weare answered, the place about us well discouered, and our devyne service ended, the daie was farr spent. The preacher did aske me if it were my pleasure to haue a sermon: hee said hee was prepared for it. I made answeare, that our men were weary and hungry, and that hee did the tyme of the daie farr past (for at other tymes hee neuer made such question, but the service finished; he began his sermon); and that if it please him, wee would spare him till some other tyme. I never failed to take such noates by wrighting out of his doctrine as my capacity could comprehend, unless some raynie day hindered my indeauour. . . . My mynde never swelled with such ympossible mountebank humors as could make me affect any other Kingdome then the kingdome of heaven. . . . Of chickins I never did eat but one, and that in my sickness. Master Ratcliffe had before that time toasted 4 or 5.³

¹ "The Travels and Works of Captain John Smith," edited by Edward Arber. A new edition by A. G. Bradley. 2 vols. Vol. I. p. lxxxix.

² *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. lxxxix.

³ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. lxxxix.

4. WILLIAM STRACHEY

William Strachey was the author of "The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia." The dates of his birth and death are unknown. In 1609 he was wrecked with Sir Thomas Gates on the Bermudas, and after his arrival in Jamestown in 1610 was appointed secretary of the Colony. He wrote an account of the shipwreck, which, some think, suggested "The Tempest" to Shakespeare. But he is mainly remembered for his above-mentioned history. It is of great documentary importance, though not all of it was the result of his own observations. He embodied in it a considerable portion of Captain John Smith's "A Map of Virginia." He was a man of some learning, but a pedant of a dreadful sort, as his numerous and unusual classical quotations show. Professor Moses Coit Tyler thinks that he was a man of "decided literary aptitude."¹ This is an exaggeration. He had plainly read a good deal, but it apparently had little effect on his clumsy style. He wrote a flowery and labored English.

He defended the English expropriation of the Indian property in these involved sentences:

What open and actual injury shall we do to the poore and innocent inhabitants, still say ours. Wherefore? It is because yt is, nowe indeede, a most doughtie and materiall reason, a great piece of injury to bring them (to invert our English proverb) out of warm sun, into God's blessing; to bring them from bodily wants, confusion, misery, and these outward anguishes, to the knowledge of a better practize, and improving of those benefitts (to a more and ever duringe advantage, and to a civiler use) which God hath given unto them, but evolved and hid in the bowells and womb of their land (to them barren and unprofitable, because unknowne); nay, to exalt, as I may saie, mere privation to the highest degree of perfection, by bringing their wretched souls (like Cerberus, from hell) from the chaynes of Sathan, to the armes and bosome of their Saviour: here is a most impious piece of injury. Let me remember what Mr. Simondes, preacher of St. Saviour's saith, in this behalf: It is as much, saith he,

¹ "A History of American Literature During the Colonial Period," by Moses Coit Tyler. Vol. I. p. 42.

as if a father should be said to offer violence to his child, when he beats him to bring him to goodnesse.¹

Then he swings into this confused, pedantic paragraph:

Planting (saith Sir George Packam, writing an apologie in the like cause) may well be divided into two sorts, when Christians, by the good liking and willing assent of the Salvadges, are admitted by them to quiett possession; and when Christians, being inhumanely repulsed, doe seek to attaine and mayntayne the right for which they come, in regard of establishment of Christian religion, either of them may be lawfully exercyzed; for what soever God, by the ministration of nature, hath created on earth, was, at the beginning, common among men; may yt not then be lawfull nowe to attempt the possession of such lands as are voide of Christian inhabitants, for Christ's sake. Harke, harke, the earth is the Lord's, and all that is therein.

*And all the world he will call and provoke
Even from the east, and so forth to the West.*

As it is in the 50 psalme, where David prophesieth how God wil call all nations by the gospell, and in the 12 verse:

For all is myne that on the earth doth dwell.

And who shall bar him from his possession. In the second booke of Esdras, the 6 chap., 14 ver., saieth the prophet: "And besides this Adam, whome thou madest over all the workes which thou hadst created; of him come we all." ²

5. OTHER ANNALISTS

Some of the other annalists who deserve mention are John Pory, Henry Spelman, Alexander Whitaker, Raphe Hamor and John Hammond. The "Relation of Virginea," by Henry Spelman, is of historical value because it is the only eye-witness account of the massacre

¹ "The Historie of Travaile into Virginia Britannia; expressing the cosmographie and comodities of the country, together with the manners and customes of the people . . . collected by William Strachey . . .," edited by R. H. Major. London. 1840. p. 17.

² *Ibid.* p. 20.

of Captain Ratcliffe and his company by Powhatan sometime in November, 1609. But as a piece of writing it is a woeful performance. The intense drama of his surroundings moved Spelman but little.

Alexander Whitaker was a prosperous English divine who went to America as a missionary, with the express purpose of converting the Indians. His "Good Newes from Virginia" was an attempt to induce more people with the zeal of the church in them to come over and spread the Kingdom. He appealed to them thus: "And remember the poore estate of the ignorant inhabitants of Virginia. Cast forth your almes (my brtheren of England) and extend your liberality on these charitable workes, which God hath called you to performe. . . . It may be some men will say the worke is great, I am not able to relieve it; I answer the work is such and such order is now taken, that those cannot give much, may be liberall in a little. Those that cannot helpe in monies by reason of their poverty, may venture their persons hither, and heere not only serve God, but helpe also these poore Indians, and build a sure foundation for themselves. . . . Shall our Nation, hitherto famous for noble attempts, and the honorable finishing of what they have undertaken, be now taxed for inconstancie, and blamed by the enemies of our protestation, for uncharitableness?"¹

John Pory was born in 1570, and probably died in 1635. He was a gentleman, and had a bachelor's and a master's degree from Cambridge, and in addition had spent many years in the study of geography and commerce. But his heavy drinking had brought him into disrepute, so his friends sent him off to Virginia in 1605, and there obtained for him the position of Speaker of the General Assembly. He went back to England in 1621, where he died a little over ten years later. While here he wrote an account of his three excursions among the Indians, and a long letter of comment on his American surroundings to Sir Dudley Carleton, a British statesman of those days. In both of these productions he was somewhat jovial, and several literary historians have professed to detect a great power for satire in him, and a facility of style. One of them has said this of him: "There was one thing he could do with a most happy facility: he could *write*. Brilliant and witty to a remarkable degree, his accounts

¹ "The Genesis of the United States," edited by Alexander Brown. N. Y. 1880. 2 vols. Vol. I. pp. 581-582.

of his American experiences are exceedingly entertaining specimens of spicy, racy English."¹ Professor Tyler has expressed a similar opinion.²

But a careful examination of Pory's writings leads one to doubt. It is true that he wrote more grammatically than, say, George Percy or Alexander Whitaker. It is true that he wrote more clearly than any of his predecessors. But any satire or effectiveness beyond the level of the ordinary was not in him. His several critical admirers have simply mistaken his occasional clarity for brilliance. Here are two typical passages from his letter to Sir Dudley:

Nowe that your lordship may know that we are not the veriest beggars in the worlde, our cowekeeper here of James Citty on Sundays goes accowtered all in fresh flaming silke; and a wife of one that in England had professed the black arte, not of a scholer, but of a collier of Crogdom, weares her rough biver hatt with a faire perle hattband and a silken suite thereto correspondent. But to leave the Populate and to come higher: — the Governor here, who at his first coming besides a great deale of worth in his person, brought only his sword with him, was at his late being in London, together with his lady, out of his meer greetings able to disburse very near three thousand pounds to furnishe himselfe for his voyage. And once within seven years I am persuaded (*absit invidia verbo*) that the Governor's place here may be as profitable as the Lord Deputies of Ireland. . . .

At my first coming hither, the solitary uncouthness of this place, compared with those parts of Christendom or Turkey where I had been, and likewise my being sequestered from all occurents and passages which are so rife there, did not a little vex me. And yet in these five months of my continuance here, there have come at one time or another eleven sail of ships into the river; but freighted more with ignorance than with any other merchandize. At length being hardened to this custom of abstinence from curiosity, I am resolved wholly to mind my business here, and next after my pen to have some good book always in store, being in solitude the best and choicest company.³

¹ "A History of Southern Literature," by Carl Holliday. N. Y. 1915. p. 31.

² "A History of American Literature During the Colonial Period," by Moses Coit Tyler. Vol. I. p. 48. Hereafter I shall refer to this work merely as Tyler.

³ From the reprint of Pory's letter in 4 Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll. Vol. IX. pp. 4-30.

Hamor had a little more in him than Pory and could write a bit better. He came to Virginia in 1610, and was secretary of the Colony for some time. How he attained this rather high position it is difficult to make out, for he says of himself that he was "for five years a personal workman there." His most important writing is entitled "True Discourses of the Present Estate of Virginia," and tells the story of the new settlement up to the Summer of 1614. Like all the other scribes of the day he wrote an uncouth and involved English, but at times he could be somewhat effective. Speaking of the natural environment of the Colony he says that he was greatly moved by

the great fields and woods abounding in strawberries, much fairer and more sweet than ours; maricocks of the fashion of a lemon, whose blossom may admit comparison with our most delightful and beautiful flowers.

On the subject of converting the Indians he bursts out in this fashion:

When the poor heathen shall be brought to entertain the honor of the name and glory of the Gospel of our blessed Saviour they shall cry with the rapture of so inexplicable mercy "Blessed be the King and Prince of England, and blessed be the English nation and blessed forever be the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, that sent these English as angels to bring such glad tidings amongst us."¹

John Hammond was also a commoner, and came to America sometime in the second quarter of the Seventeenth Century. He was in this country more than twenty years, and in 1656 had published in London a defense of Virginia and Maryland, entitled, "Leah and Rachel, or, the Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Mary-land: Their Present Condition Impartially stated and related. With a Removal of such Imputations as are scandalously cast on those Countries, whereby many deceived Souls, chose rather to Beg, Steal, rot in Prison, and come to shamefull death, then to better their being by going thither, wherein is plenty of all things necessary for Humane subsistence." It is full of vigorous and, very often indeed, rather effective English. It is strange that Professor Tyler dismisses him with

¹ "Virginia: A History of the People," edited by John Esten Cooke. N. Y. 1905. p. 138.

the slur that he wrote badly,¹ and that Barrett Wendell no more than mentions him, and that "The Cambridge History of American Literature" passes him by completely. As a writer he was far above all the Percys and Whitakers. Here are typical excerpts from his "Leah and Rachel":

It is the glory of every nation to enlarge themselves, to encourage their own foreign attempts, and to be able to have of their own, within their own territories, as many several commodities as they can attain to, that so others may rather be beholding to them, then they to others; and to this purpose have Encouragements, Priviledges and Ennuities been given to any Discoveries or Adventurers into remote Colonies, by all politique Common Wealths in the world.

But alas, we Englishmen (in all things else famous, and to other Countries terrible) do not onely faile in this, but vilifie, scandalize and cry down such parts of the unknown world, as have been found out, settled and made flourishing, by the charge, hazzard and diligence of their brethren, as if because removed from us, we either account them people of another world or enemies. . . .

It is long since I came from thence (God knows sore against my will) having lived there upward of one and twenty years; . . . and therefore can by experience, not hearsay (as *Bullock* and other lying Writters have done, who at randome or for their private lure have rendered their books ridiculous and themselves infamous lyars, nor will I like them, over extoll the places, as if they were rather Paradices than earthly habitations; but truly let ye know, what they are, and how the people there live.)²

6. THE BURWELL PAPERS

The annalists hitherto referred to were not literati, even in the most liberal interpretation of the word. There was no authors' pride about them. They wrote for a definite purpose: to answer the charges brought against Virginia by the malicious and ill-informed in England, and to induce more people to settle there. Thus they wrote honestly;

¹ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 70.

² Force's Collection of Historical Tracts. Vol. III. No. 14. pp. 6-7.

there was very little "style" in their pamphlets and books, with the exception of those by such fancy college men as Strachey and Pory. But in the last quarter of the Seventeenth Century all this honesty of purpose was thrown to the winds, and it became the fashion to write prettily. Whether this was due to the influence of the contemporary Restoration wits in England it is difficult to say, the documentary evidence is so scanty.

This transition from the former earnestness and ruggedness to posterous quibbling and conceits is well represented by the so-called Burwell Papers. They were all accounts of the Bacon Rebellion of 1676, and are so known after the name of the Virginia family which made them public a hundred years later. They are really three separate accounts: (a) "The Beginning, Progress, and Conclusion of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia in the Years 1675 and 1676," by "T. M."; (b) "An Account of Our Late Troubles in Virginia," written in 1676 by Mrs. An. Cotton of Q. Creek; and (c) "A Narrative of the Indian and Civil Wars in Virginia in the years 1675 and 1676." It is only the last that is known strictly as the Burwell Papers, though frequently the name is applied to all three of them.

Very little is known about any of the authors. "T. M." says of himself that he was a planter, that he lived in Northumberland, and that he was elected a member of the Virginia Assembly in 1676, but he does not give his full name. His account is by far the best of the three. On the whole, it is simply written, and is one of the best pieces of prose composed in Virginia in the whole Seventeenth Century. The account by Mrs. An. Cotton of Q. Creek — about whom nothing whatever is known — is not quite as good as that by "T. M.", and has many more flowery passages. Every now and then it blossoms out in an absurdity such as the following:

which while he [Bacon] was contriveing, Death summons him to more urgent affairs in to whose hands (after a short siege) he surrenders his life.¹

But it is in the anonymous "A Narrative of the Indian and Civil Wars in Virginia" that the smartnesses and verbal affectations come into their full bloom. The author has told how Bacon had besieged the Indians, who after a few days began to suffer want, and he then goes on thus:

¹ Force's Collection of Historical Tracts. Vol. I. No. 11. p. 9.

And although it is saide that the Indians doth the least minde their bellies (as being content with a little) of any people in the world, yet now their bellies began to mind them, and their stomachs too, which began to be more inclinable to pease than war; which was the cause (no more horse-flesh to be had) that they sent out 6 of their Woerowancee [chief men] to commence a treaty. What the artickles were that they brought along with them to treat of I doe not know, but certainly they were so unacceptable to the English, that they caused the Commissioners braines to be knocked out for dictating so badly to their tongues, which yet, tis possible, exprest more reason, than the English had to prove the lawfulness of this action, being diametricall to the law of arms.¹

Another stylistic morsel:

And here who can do less than wonder at the mutable and impermanent deportments of that blind Godes fortune, who in the morning leades men with disgraces, and ere night crowns him with honours; sometimes depressing, and again elevating, as her fickle humer is to smile or frown, of which this Gentleman [Bacon's] fate was a kind of epitemmy in the several vicissitudes and changes he was subjected in a very few days. For in the morning, before his tryall he was in his enemys hopes, and his friends feares, judged to receive the Gurdeon due to a Rebell (and such he was proclaimed to be), are ere night crowned the Darling of the peoples hopes and desires.²

The Bacon forces win over the government forces, and Governor Berkeley, finding Jamestown deserted, and thinking that now there was a good chance to recover his power, returns to town:

The Towne being thus forsaken, by the Baconians, his Honour enters the same the next day, about noone; where after he had rendered thanks unto God for his safe arrival (which he forgot not to perform upon his knees, at his first footeing the shore) he applies himselfe not only to secure what hee had got possession of, but to increase and enlarge the same, to his best advantage. And knowing that the people of ould, useally painted by the God

¹ *Ibid.* p. 11.

² *Ibid.* p. 12.

of war with a belly to be fed, as well as with hands to fight, he began to case about for the bringing in of provisions, for to feed his soulders; and in the next place for soulders, as well to reinforce his strength within, as to enlarge his quarters abroad: But as the saying is, Man may propose, but God will dispose; when that his Honour thought himselfe so much at liberty, that he might the liberty to go when and where he pleased, his expectations became very speedily and in a moment frustrated.¹

At one point in his battle with the government Bacon resorted to the scheme of placing women in front of the men. This brought forth the following observation from the author:

The poor Gent: women were mightily astonished at this project; neather were their husbands voide of amazements at this subtile invention.²

¹ Force's Collection of Historical Tracts. Vol. I. No. 11. p. 12.

² *Ibid.* p. 24.

CHAPTER IV

The South

The Other Southern Colonies

CHAPTER IV

The Other Southern Colonies

VIRGINIA PRODUCED MORE AND BETTER ANNALISTS IN THE Seventeenth Century than all the other Southern Colonies put together. It was, indeed, the only Colony below the Potomac where writing of any merit whatever was then being done. In a way it was the mother of the other settlements — the Carolinas (which included Georgia until 1719), Maryland (which then included Delaware), and Georgia. The early leaders in each of them were Virginians.

In October, 1629, Charles I granted what is now South Carolina to his attorney-general, Sir Robert Heath, with the express provision that he found a Colony there. But he did practically nothing about it for the next thirty years. It was a group of four Virginians who first explored the territory — Edward Bland, Abraham Wood, Sackford Brewster and Elias Pennant. In the months of August and September, 1650, they traveled in the portion of the Colony near the Carolina borderland, which they called New Britain, and later wrote a pamphlet on their expedition. It was an account of each day's movements, and a description of the land's topography, climate, etc. Its purpose, like that of all the other annals written in that time, was to induce Englishmen to settle there, and to spread the Gospel among the Indians.¹

Soon other Virginians explored the territory, and they all wrote accounts of their findings. I shall mention only the more prominent of them. Francis Yeardley, in May 8, 1654, wrote a letter to John Ferrar, who was for a time a treasurer of the Virginia Company, in which he reported in glowing terms what he saw in the Carolinas in the several expeditions he made there. It is known in the literature of the time as "Francis Yeardley's Narrative of Excursions into Carolina, 1654," and was of course calculated to arouse Ferrar's interest in the project of sending colonists over there.² Some other such

¹ "Narratives of Early Carolina; 1650-1708," edited by Alexander S. Salley, Jr. N. Y. 1878. p. 3 ff.

² *Ibid.* pp. 23-24.

pamphlets were the following: "A Relation of a Discovery," by Captain William Hilton, 1664; "A Relation of a Voyage on the Coast of the Province of Carolina, 1666," by Robert Sandford; and "Carolina, or, A Description of the Present State of that Country," by Thomas Ashe.¹ The last contains the most glowing account of all.

In the case of Maryland there were even fewer annalists. The grant of the territory was made by Charles I to George Calvert, first Lord Baltimore, and a Catholic. The first party of colonists of considerable proportions to settle there was a group of Puritans who were expelled from Virginia for nonconformity. Perhaps the earliest two accounts of the Colony were by a Jesuit, the Rev. Andrew White, who was born in London in 1579, came to Maryland in 1634, and died there twenty-two years later. His narratives were written in Latin and entitled, "Relatio Itineris in Marylandiam; Declaratio Coloniae Domine Baronis de Baltimoro" and "Excerpta ex Diversis Litteris Missionarium ab Anno 1635 ad Annum 1638."

After the Rev. Mr. White came George Alsop. Very little is known about him. He was born in London in 1638, and probably bound himself as a servant for four years in the Colony to pay for his transportation. He was the author of "A Character of the Province of Maryland," a medley of frolicsome papers, both in verse and prose. He was plainly one of the bad boys of the time. In one place, he says, "Herds of deer are as numerous in this province of Maryland as cuckolds can be in London, only their horns are not so well dressed and tipped with silver."² In another: "Here, if the devil had such a vagary in his head as he had once among the Gadarenes he might drown a thousand head of hogs, and they'd never be missed; for the very woods of this province swarm with them."³

It would be of no value to describe in detail these various tracts. They all have some historical importance, but no æsthetic merit. With the possible exception of George Alsop's narrative, not one of them rises even to the level of the accounts by William Strachey or Alexander Whitaker.

¹ There is some doubt about the authorship of this tract. See *Ibid.* p. 50.

² *Op. cit.* p. 94.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 94.

CHAPTER V

The South

*Belles Lettres in the Southern
Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*

CHAPTER V

Belles Lettres in the Southern Colonies in the Seventeenth Century

I. GENERAL REVIEW

WITH ONE EXCEPTION, THE SOUTHERN COLONISTS PRODUCED nothing whatever in the way of *belles lettres* in the entire Seventeenth Century. The Virginians, who were the political leaders below the Potomac in that time, did, as we have seen, bring forth numerous annals. But if it were not for their historical importance they would have been forgotten long ago. The Southerners, it seems, were interested in nothing save their immediate environment and the physical means of conquering it. They were not interested even in the writing of doggerel, the occupation of all the scalawags and wastrels of contemporary England. Nearly every literate Englishman in those days amused himself by composing jingles. But for some reason or other this pastime suffered the death in the first English settlements over here. According to the very latest researches there was only one Southerner who wrote doggerel in the Seventeenth Century; the rest—that is, the 35 % of them who could write or read at all—wrote nothing and read nothing, save the aforementioned annals.

The one exception just referred to was Richard Rich, who made the voyage to Virginia in 1609, and returned the year following. He spent the rest of his days longing to come back, but circumstances prevented, so instead he composed what he called a ballad, entitled, "Newes From Virginia : of the happy arrivall of that famous and worthy knight Sir Thomas Gates and well reputed and valiant Captaine Newport into England." In the introduction to this dreadful poem he calls himself "a soldier, blunt and plain,"¹ and says that he wrote in verse "only to feed his owne humour."² It is possible, as one historian sug-

¹ "A Library of American Literature," edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen MacKay Hutchinson. N. Y. 1889-1890. Vol. I. p. 22.

² *Ibid.* p. 22.

gests,¹ that he hoped to earn enough money from this masterpiece to pay for his passage, but apparently his hopes were futile. Here are a few stanzas from the poem, eighty-eight lines long and the first bit of verse ever written by a Southern colonist:

*It is no idle fabulous tale, nor is it fayned newes:
For Truth herself is heere arriv'd, because you should not muse.
With her both Gates and Newport come, to tell Report doth lie,
Which did devulge unto the world, that they at sea did dye.*

*Tis true that eleaven monthes and more, these gallant worthy
wights
Was in shippe Sea-venture nam'd depriv'd Virginia's sight.
And bravely did they glyde the maine, till Neptune gan to frowne,
As if a courser prowldy backt would throwe his ryder downe.*

Two men of the company die in Virginia.

*And for the losse of these two soules, which were accounted deere,
A sonne and daughter then was borne, and were baptized there.
The two and forty weekes being past, they hoyst sayle and away;
Their ships with hogs well freighted were, their harts with
mickle joy.*

Lord Delaware comes in the midst of discontent in the Colony.

*A discreet counsell he creates of men of worthy fame,
That noble Gates leiftenant was the admirall had to name.
the Worthy Sir George Somers knight, and others of commaund;
Maister Georg Percy, which is brother unto Northumberland.²*

Even in the field of theological writing, then at its high tide, not only in the mother country, but also in New England, the Southern Colonies had nothing to show. This, in large part, can be explained by the fact that the Southern settlers, though just as intolerant of non-

¹ "A History of American Literature: 1607-1865," by William P. Trent. N. Y. 1903. p. 13.

² "A Library of American Literature," by Stedman and Hutchinson. Vol. I. pp. 22-23. But one copy of the original of "Newes from Virginia" is known to exist. This was discovered in a volume of tracts in London by Wm. Halliwell, the well-known English Shakespearean scholar. Twenty-five copies were printed in 1865, but fifty of them were destroyed. In 1874 twenty-five additional copies were printed in London. See "History of American Verse, 1610-1897," by James L. Onderdonck. Chicago. 1901. p. 17.

conformists, were not as intensely interested in the searchings of the soul, as the Northern settlers, and there was so very little communication between the two that no opportunity offered itself to the latter to influence the former. The only theologian of the early colonial South who deserves any notice at all was the Rev. James Blair, heretofore mentioned, the founder and first president of the College of William and Mary. He wrote over 100 sermons, but most of them are now unintelligible. They are worthless both as theology and as mere writing, and no Southern patriot, however rabid, now contends differently. He is given no mention whatever even in "The Library of Southern Literature," where are represented, perhaps, a greater number of nonentities than are to be found in the literary anthology of any section of any other country on the face of the globe.

The truth was that very little printing of any kind was done in the South before the middle of the Eighteenth Century. There was no overpowering passion for the printed word down there as there was in New England. Much of this was due to the nature of the political despotism then in power. During a large portion of the Seventeenth Century Virginia, for example, was afflicted with the administration of Governor William Berkeley, who held office from 1641 to 1677, and who did all in his power to keep the populace in ignorance. In his famous reply to the English commissioners who questioned him concerning conditions in Virginia in 1670 he said, "I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing; and I hope we shall not have, these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God help us from both." He was recalled a year later, but unfortunately his policy was not recalled with him. Thus there is no record of a printing press in Virginia earlier than 1681, but soon after it was set up the printer was required "not to print anything hereafter, until his majesty's pleasure shall be known." Two years later, when Lord Effingham became Governor of the Colony, he was given instructions "to allow no person to use a printing press on any occasion whatever."¹ From then on until 1729 no printing of any kind was done in the Colony.

Things were even worse in the other Southern Colonies. There were no presses in Maryland until 1726, and all official documents

¹ Quoted by Tyler. Vol. I. pp. 89-90.

had to be sent to Philadelphia to be typed.¹ In what is now North Carolina printing was introduced only in 1755,² and in what is now South Carolina, in 1730.³

2. BACON'S EPITAPH

Literature, in any rational sense of the word, was nonexistent in the South of the Seventeenth Century, but there was one piece of writing which deserves to live. It was an elegy on Nathaniel Bacon, who led the Bacon Rebellion, and was entitled, "Bacon's Epitaph, made by his Man." This is all that is known about the author. If he really was "his Man" then we have the rather strange phenomenon of the best poem produced on this Continent in the whole pre-Revolutionary era being composed, not by a "Cavalier," not by an Oxford man, not by a learned theologian, but by a menial, a servant, po' white trash! As Professor Trent says, the epitaph was "the single product of sustained poetic art that was written in America for a hundred and fifty years after the settlement of Jamestown."⁴ Beside it all the poetry written in New England before "Thanatopsis," including everything by the absurdly overestimated Anne Bradstreet, seems like fudge. Why it has been excluded from practically all the anthologies is a mystery.

It is well worth the space to reprint the epitaph in full:

*Death why so crewill! What no other way
To manifest they splleene, but thus to slay
Our hope of safety; liberty, our all
Which, through thy tyranny, with him must fall
To its late caoss? Had they rigid force
Bindelt by retale, and not thus in gross
Grief had bin silent: Now wee must complaine
Since thou, in him, hast more then thousand slane
Whose lives and safetys did so much depend
On him there lif, with him there lives must end.*

¹ "The History of Printing in America," by Isaiah Thomas. Boston. 1810. 2 vols. Vol. II. p. 127.

² *Ibid.* p. 150.

³ *Ibid.* p. 150.

⁴ "A History of American Literature," by William P. Trent. pp. 22-23.

*If't be a sin to think Death brib'd can bee
 Wee myst be guilty; say twas bribery
 Guided the fatall shaft. Virginias foes
 To whom for secret crimes, just vengeance owes
 Disarved plagues, dreading there just disart
 Corrupted Death by Parasscellcian art
 Him to destroy: whose well tride curage such,
 There heartless harts, nor arms, nor strength could touch.*

*Who now must heale those wounds, or stop that blood
 The Heathen made, and drew into a flood?
 Who is't must pleade our cause? nor Trump nor Drum
 Nor Deputation; these alas are dumb
 And Cannot Speake. Our Arms (though near so strong)
 Will want the aide of his Commanding tongue,
 Which conquer'd more than Ceasar: He orethrew
 Onely the outward frame; this could subdue
 The ruged workes of nature. Soules replcate
 With dull Child could, h'd annemate with heate
 Drawne forth of reasons Lymbick. In a word
 Marss and Minerva, both in him Concurd
 For arts, for arms, whose pen and sword alike
 As Catos did, may admiration strike
 Into his foes; while they confess with all
 It was their guilt stil'd him a Criminall.
 Onely this difference does from truth proceed
 They in the guilt, he in the name must bleed.
 While none shall dare his obsequies to sing
 In deserv'd measures; until time shall bring
 Truth Crown'd with freedom, and from danger free
 To sound his praises to posterity.*

*Here let him rest: while wee this truth report
 Hee's gone from hence unto a high Court
 To pleade his Cause where he by this doth know
 Whether to Ceasar hee was friend, or foe.¹*

¹ Force's Collection of Historical Tracts. Vol. I. No. 11. pp. 29-30.

Note: I have left out of this section any mention of George Sandys, whom Professors Tyler and Wendell treat at some length. Sandys came to Virginia in 1621, and probably returned four years later. While there he held an important public office, and completed the greater part of his translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses." The translation was a competent piece of work, but since its composition had in no way anything to do with the life of early Virginia, there is no more reason for calling him an American than there is for calling Byron a Greek because he wrote some of his verses on Greek soil.

CHAPTER VI

New England

*New England in the
Seventeenth Century*

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER VI

New England in the Seventeenth Century

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

THE LITERARY OUTPUT OF THE NORTHERN COLONIES IN THE Seventeenth Century was far greater, if not of much better quality, than that of the Southern Colonies, and its influence on the future literature and general culture of the land was of the first magnitude. But even more than in the case of the writings of the South it is impossible to understand fully and estimate correctly the writings of the North without a glance at the political and theological doings of the time. New England was made favorably known to the English as far back as 1602 through the explorations of Bartholomew Gosnold, and in 1603 and 1605 through those of Martin Pring and George Weymouth respectively. In 1606 a royal grant of the territory was made to the Plymouth Company in order to encourage settlement there, but very few colonists came over. It was not until 1614, when Captain Smith traversed the coast, that a genuine interest in the land was aroused.

Four years later a new charter was granted to the New England Council, successor to the Plymouth Colony, and a small band of colonists settled at Plymouth. During its existence of fifteen years the New England Council made numerous grants of territory, and from these grew the Colonies of Massachusetts (1628), Maine (1622), and New Hampshire (1629). The Council attempted a general government over the whole domain, but failed. Robert Georges, son of Sir Ferdinando Georges, was sent over as Governor-General in 1623, but in a year returned in disgust. The colonists refused to listen to him.

The founder of Connecticut is usually given as the Rev. Thomas Hooker, who fled to Hartford in 1638 from the religious and political despotism of the Massachusetts Puritans. But that is not correct. "As

soon as the land around Massachusetts Bay was all taken up, adventurers began searching for better soil, and it was not long before they heard of the wonderful Connecticut river country far to the west. So they went forth to see and to possess. In the Winter of 1635-1636 an advance guard, driving cattle and carrying their household goods, . . . planted the three towns of Hartford, Windsor and Wethersfield."¹ Hooker thus came to Connecticut two years after its founding. A separate Colony was founded in New Haven in 1638, by emigrants from England, but it was annexed to the Connecticut Colony in 1662.

Neither was Roger Williams, who fled to Providence in 1636 to establish an ecclesiastical and political democracy there, the founder of Rhode Island. The lands around Narragansett Bay had been known for some time previous to be full of attractive sites for settlements, and small numbers of colonists had planted themselves there as far back as 1631.²

Plymouth was a separate Colony until its union with the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1691, and New Hampshire was a part of the latter from 1641-1643 to 1678. Maine passed under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts in 1652, and did not regain its independence until 1820.

Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut and New Haven were a group of neighbors, in large part independent of the mother country, and for a time independent of each other. But with the coming of the wars with the Indians, the Dutch and the French, they saw the need of some form of mutual protection, and so, under the Articles of Confederation of 1643, formed the first political union in the history of the country: the United Colonies of New England or, as it is more commonly known, the New England Confederacy. The confederate authority was vested in a board of eight commissioners, two chosen annually from each Colony. Massachusetts, because of its size, was the leader in all the activities of this commission. An agreement of six commissioners was necessary to carry a measure, but if there were less than six the measure could become law if adopted by the General Courts of all the Colonies.

Upon the downfall of the Puritan Commonwealth in the mother country in 1660 numerous grievances were presented to Charles II against the Puritan governments of New England, such as the perse-

¹ "The Rise of American Civilization," by the Beards. Vol. I. p. 58.

² "The Founding of New England," by James Truslow Adams. Boston. 1925. p. 184.

cution of the Quakers and the denial of the right of appeal to the crown. In the next twenty years several attempts were made to curb the spirit of independence in New England, but they were all failures.

The legend persists that the religious motive was the main one that impelled the settlement of New England. The truth was that even in the settlement of Plymouth, founded by the Pilgrim Fathers, it played a minor part. Only about a third of the company were of the people who fled to Holland for conscience's sake.¹ The rest were composed in the main of runaway convicts, paupers and other undesirable characters who were out to better their lots. In the case of the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony the religious element was of even less importance. "The plan of those who received the grant of this imperial area," says Professor Edward Channing, "seems to have been to secure a profitable return from fishing in the ocean, trading in furs with the Indians, and such agriculture as might seem desirable. . . . In the beginning, therefore, the scheme was designated to be a commercial venture."² Mr. James Truslow Adams corroborates this finding thus:

It is evident that other causes, besides the quarrels in the Church and the tyranny of Laud, must have been operative on a large scale, to explain the full extent of the movement [the great migration of 1630-1640]. It seems probable that the principal cause that induced such an extraordinary number of people, from the ranks of the lesser gentry and those below them, to make so complete a break in their lives . . . was economic. They came for the simple reason that they wanted to better their condition. They wanted to be rid of the growing and incalculable exactions of the government. They wanted to own land; and it was this last motive, perhaps, which mainly had attracted those 12,000 persons out of 16,000 who swelled the population of Massachusetts in 1640, but were not church members; for the Puritan Colonies were the only ones in which land could be owned in fee simple, without quit-rent or lord, and in which it was freely given to settlers.³

It is in this fact, strangely overlooked by most orthodox historians, that we are to seek the explanation of the collapse of the Puritan

¹ *Ibid.* p. 97.

² "A History of the United States," by Edward Channing. N. Y. 1916. Vol. I. pp. 322-323.

³ "The Founding of New England," by Adams. pp. 121-122.

oligarchy at the turn of the century and the emergence of a freer life and a more civilized literature. The great bulk of the population of early New England, as I have just said, were tradespeople, but in the first half of the Seventeenth Century they had not yet learned how to extract riches from their environment, and thus they were obliged to submit to their political overlords, the enterprising Puritan divines who had captured the government. But in the ensuing three decades they developed fishing, shipping and the textile industry, and grew rich. Having grown rich, they yearned for more power and for a life somewhat less barbaric than the theologians had forced upon them, and they got what they were after. Toward the end of the century they had stripped the Puritan oligarchy of so much power that it was impelled to incite the witchcraft madness in order to bolster up the waning allegiance of the public,¹ but it proved of no avail.

I. PURITANISM AS A WAY OF LIFE²

While it was true that few of the early New England colonists subscribed to the theology of Puritanism, it had a tremendous effect on the life of the time, so tremendous, indeed, that its traces are still to be found in present-day America. But before we go into the effect let us first take a look at the thing itself. The cardinal principle of Puritanism was the absolutely unconditioned will of God. From this there followed (a) the doctrine that everything in life has a moral significance, and (b) the doctrine of predestination. The latter is the central point of Calvinism, the parent of Puritanism. Calvin said in his "Institutes of the Christian Religion": "God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and the ruin of his posterity in him, but also arranged all by the determination of his own will." But God did not condemn all people to Hell. He chose certain individuals to be saved, foreordained from all eternity by "His gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit." The rest of mankind He condemned to

¹ "Men, Women & Manners in Colonial Times," by Sydney Geo. Fisher. Phila. 1900. Vol. I. p. 166.

² Of late there has been much skepticism regarding the old notions about the basic elements of New England Puritanism. The tendency nowadays is to say that we really don't know. But even so determined a skeptic as Dr. Kenneth B. Murdock of Harvard agrees that Puritanism gives itself easily to characterization, and he implies that in all probability it was what Dr. James Truslow Adams thinks it was. ("The Puritan Tradition in American Literature," by Kenneth B. Murdock in "The Reinterpretation of American Literature," edited by Norman Foerster. N. Y. 1928.) In this section I shall refer to Dr. Murdock's study as Murdock in Foerster.

eternal Hell "by a just and irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment."

Nothing whatever that the individual did would alter his preordained fate. But how was he to know whether he was of the condemned or of the elect? By a careful study of his own actions, a minute scrutiny of the yearnings of his own soul. Herein, plainly, to digress a moment, is the explanation for those torturing searchings of heart that fill practically all New England literature in the Seventeenth Century, and for the almost universal custom in those parts of keeping diaries.

The Puritan believed in this Calvinistic doctrine with the utmost tenacity. "His imagination was wholly concentrated on questions of religion. . . . His creed must not be considered as merely a series of logical deductions from the Bible, which appealed to him solely through his intellect. Heaven and Hell were as vividly visualized by him as external facts."¹ Of course, it was only the more insane Puritans who considered themselves condemned; nearly all the rest thought of themselves as the elect. "Such belief," as Mr. Adams says, "naturally fostered that smugness of self-assurance that has always been characteristic of Puritan reformers in all ages, and also a hard intolerance. . . . No act of intolerance shown toward [those opposed to] them by the Puritans could thus compare with the almost unthinkable intolerance displayed toward them by the Author of their being. To show toleration or mercy toward such was, logically, to exalt humanity above the deity."²

The Puritan thus felt justified in practicing the greatest tyranny against the dissenters from his doctrine. As Mr. Adams points out,³ the ordinary political despotism of the time left the private conduct of the individual untouched, and the conformity forced upon him by the established churches left him much freedom outside the doctrinal domain. But the Puritan despotism left no such free spaces in life. Nothing was so small or so private as to be indifferent. The cut of the individual's clothes, his name, the way he dressed his hair, what he did in the marital chamber, could all be regulated in accordance with God's will. Everything was to be found in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, the cruel Mosaic laws of which gave the Puritans a much greater delight than they found in the kindly teachings of

¹ "The Founding of New England," by Adams, p. 79. See also Murdock in Foerster, pp. 91-93.

² *Ibid.* p. 79.

³ *Ibid.* p. 79. See also Murdock in Foerster, p. 94.

Jesus in the New Testament. It was because of this that the contemplation of the tortures of Hell was the main legal pleasure of the Puritans, and it was because of this that nearly all the imaginative literature of Seventeenth Century New England deals with that subject.

The Puritan divines captured the government of New England immediately upon their landing. In fact, it seemed for a while that they wanted to set up a government completely independent of the mother country. They ceased to issue writs in the King's name, and it was not long before they dropped the oath of allegiance to the Crown, and adopted a new one wherein allegiance was pledged, not to England, but to Massachusetts. They also forbade all appeals to the Crown, and considered it treason even to speak of them. This spirit of independence held sway in New England for some time, and the royal authorities had considerable trouble in subduing it.

As in nearly all the other Colonies, there was a religious qualification for suffrage in Massachusetts during the greater part of the Seventeenth Century; it was only in 1680 that King William forced its repeal and the substitution in its place of a property qualification. The number of voters in Massachusetts was very small, since few belonged to the church. In 1634, out of 4,000 colonists but 350 had the right to vote. In 1670, out of 25,000 but 1100 had the right to vote.

The Puritan ministers, who were always consulted by the lay authorities, and thus were the real power in the government, did not merely take away the franchise from those who failed to agree with them in their religious beliefs; they also made it miserable for them otherwise. The banishment of Roger Williams and of Anne Hutchinson are well known. All suspects arriving in the Colony were closely examined, and if found unsound were banished; "and to prevent the secret presence of heretics there was a law forbidding anyone to entertain strangers without permission from" a public official or a minister.¹ If a resident, hitherto sound in doctrine, suddenly turned skeptic, the Puritans dealt with him or her in a very effective manner. There was the case of a woman, named Oliver, who maintained that the magistrates and the ministers together had the power to ordain ministers, and that all those who dwell in the same town and confess the same faith should be received at the communion. For such heretical opinions she was thrown into prison. Later, for reproaching some public offi-

¹ "Men, Women & Manners in Colonial Times," by Sydney Geo. Fisher. Vol. I. p. 140.

cials, she was whipped. Still later, for speaking evil of the ministers, she had a cleft stick put on her tongue for half an hour.¹

The Puritans had a special horror of Quakers. They inflicted a fine of £100 on any person bringing one within the Colony. If a Quaker returned after having been banished, he was punished thus: for the first offense one of his ears was cut off, for the second offense the other ear was sliced off (for women whipping was the punishment in both cases), and for the third offense, regardless of whether the culprit was man or woman, a red hot iron was bored through his or her tongue.² Later on, the third offense was put on a par with idolatry, blasphemy, adultery and witchcraft, and was punishable by death.

The Puritans, as I have said, occupied every spare moment of their lives in the contemplation of religious subjects, and in the search for possible theological and moral meanings in every one of their acts. The ministers, of course, were looked up to as being little less than divine. But theirs was a difficult job. They had to give "strong doctrine and strong reason," and frequently they preached before audiences who knew more about theology than they did. The people used to come to church with notebooks, and had the right to interrupt the preacher to ask him questions.

The sermons of the Puritan divines were of inordinate length, so long, in fact, that even the Dudley government of Massachusetts, which was a bulwark of the faith, once had to pass a resolution that "the minister that preaches on Thursday next be prayed from this court to hasten his Sermon because of the short days."³ In the beginning the ministers used to preach four times a week, but it was found that this custom forced the people to neglect their affairs. So after much anguish on everybody's part preaching was limited to Sunday, but the ministers made up for the time thus taken away from them by preaching all night Saturday and all day and night Sunday. The least time possible was taken off for lunch. Frequently the discussions about Hell would stretch out so late into the night of Sunday that the ministers' assistants would try to break up the congregation so that people who lived at a distance could get home by daylight.⁴

The Puritans raised religious questions at every opportunity possible, so engrossed were they in the subject, and the more fine-spun they were the more they delighted in them. Governor Winthrop's

¹ *Ibid.* p. 139.

² *Ibid.* p. 171.

³ Quoted by Adams in "The Founding of New England." p. 421.

⁴ Fisher. Vol. I. p. 138.

journal is full of discussions of such questions as, whether there could be an indwelling of the Holy Ghost in a believer without a personal union, whether it was lawful to have any dealings whatever with such idolaters as the French and Spaniards, and whether women should wear veils. On the problem of veils Roger Williams was in favor of them, but John Cotton one morning argued so effectively against them that in the afternoon the women all came to church without them.¹ On one occasion Governor Winthrop paid a visit of state to Governor Bradford in Plymouth, and in his honor all the people repaired to church and a religious debate was started. Then the visiting Governor was given the freedom of the pulpit.²

The early New Englanders were so wrought up with their religion that their minds were constantly filled with gloom and the most horrible forebodings. They believed in signs, devils and portents. An upturned boat, a strange note in the buzz of a fly, the twitch of a finger, a chance expression in a sermon, drove them mad. Governor Winthrop tells the story of a man who cried out in the night, "Art Thou come, Lord Jesus?", sprang from the window and ran through the snow, falling on his knees and praying at intervals till he froze to death.³

The diaries of the older people are full of such passages as, "Great dulness and deadness was in my heart. I am in despair of my salvation."⁴ In the case of the younger people the disease took on an even more serious form. Samuel Sewall tells of the following experience of his young daughter, Betty:

A little while after dinner she burst into an amazing cry, which caused all the family to cry too. Her mother asked the reason; she gave none. At last said she was afraid she should goe to Hell; her sins were not pardoned. She was wounded by my reading a sermon of Mr. Morton's, Text, ye shall seek me and shall not find me. And those words in the sermon, ye shall seek me and die in your sins, ran in her mind and terrified her greatly. . . . [She] told me she was afraid she should goe to Hell, was like Spira not selected.⁵

¹ Fisher. Vol. I. p. 137.

² *Ibid.* pp. 137-138.

³ "History of New England," by John Winthrop. Edited by James Savage. 2 vols. Vol. I. p. 280.

⁴ Quoted by Fisher. Vol. I. p. 140.

⁵ Samuel Sewall's Diary, edition of the Mass. Hist. Soc. 3 vols. Vol. II. p. 132.

There was the case of a boy, who wrote in his diary: "Of the many sins which then I was guilty of, none so sticks upon me as that being very young I was whistling on the Sabbath day; and for fear of being seen I did it behind the door. A great reproach to God."¹ So he prayed in his sleep, "chewed much on excellent sermons," and died at the age of nineteen.

As I have said, the Puritans, because of this theology, were greatly concerned with what they called morals. They watched everyone's conduct closely, and administered a stern discipline for the most trifling offenses. There was the case of one Robert Keane, a shop-keeper, who was charged with having demanded too high a price for his goods, and brought before the secular court. He was fined £100, and then turned over to the mercies of his church. So he confessed his sin, and with tears bewailed his covetous heart.² The General Court, early in its career, forbade "short sleeves whereby the nakedness of the arms may be discovered" and later ordered that there were to be no "immoderate great sleeves, immoderate great breeches, knots of ryban, broad shoulder bands and rayles, silk ruses, double ruffles and cuffs."³ Long hair among men was the subject of an acrimonious theological debate for some time, and was finally forbidden by law, and the women were repeatedly complained of because of their "wearing borders of hair and their cutting, curling, and immodest laying out of their hair."

The blueness of the Puritan Sunday is well known. No amusements of any kind were to be enjoyed on that day. No respectable people were to be seen on the street unless on the way to or from church. At home the people were to indulge in no domestic affections of any kind. Several ministers refused to baptize children born on Sunday because of the belief then current that such children were also conceived on Sunday. One of these ministers finally gave in when his own wife gave birth to twins on a Sunday.⁴

Perhaps nothing shows better the Puritanic mind than their most celebrated school and children's book, "The New England Primer." It was, indeed, the Little Bible of New England.⁵ Originally it was

¹ Quoted by Fisher. Vol. I. p. 142.

² Fisher. Vol. I. pp. 136-137.

³ Quoted by Fisher. Vol. I. p. 185.

⁴ Proceeding of the Mass. Hist. Soc. New Series. Vol. VI. p. 494.

⁵ "The New England Primer. A History of its Origin and Development with a Reprint of the Unique Copy of the Earliest Known Edition and Many Fac-simile Illustrations and Reproductions," edited by Paul Leicester Ford. N. Y. 1897. p. 2.

not a school book, but rather a nursery book, whose purpose was to inculcate the true spirit of religion into babies. Gradually it was filled with all sorts of moral precepts and bits of historical knowledge, and before long became part of the school curriculum. It was changed from time to time, and went through innumerable editions.¹ One store in Philadelphia, between 1749 and 1766, sold 37,000 copies. It has been estimated that from its first publication, somewhere between the years 1687 and 1690, the Primer has had an average annual sale of 20,000 for over 150 years. That would mean that so far more than 3,000,000 copies of it have been sold.²

The typical Primer usually contained the alphabet, the syllabarium, the alphabet of lessons, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the poem of the martyr John Rogers with an illustration of his burning, and the names of the Books of the Bible. The whole was adorned with engravings of a most hideous sort. It was the most condensed form of Hell theology ever put on paper, and also the simplest. Babes, it is said, understood it, and adults gloated over it with fond remembrance. "Here was no easy road to knowledge and salvation; but in prose as bare of beauty as the whitewash of their churches, in poetry as rough and stern as their storm-torn coast, in pictures as crude and unfinished as their own glacial-smoothed boulders, between stiff oak covers, which symbolized the contents, the children were led, until, from being unregenerate . . . [they reached] that happy state"³ when they were safely in Heaven.

Here is a typical bit of poetry from it:

*In Adams's Fall
We sinned all.*

*Thy Life to mend
This Book attend.*

*The Cat doth play,
And after slay.*

*A Dog will bite,
The Thief at Night.*

¹ The best available discussion of the numerous editions of the Primer is that of G. W. Winship in "Notes on a Reprint of the New England Primer improved for the Year 1777. . . ." Cambridge, 1922. Especially the Introduction, wherein Mr. Winship discusses fifty-seven different editions of the Primer.

² Ford. p. 19.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 7-8.

*An Eagle's flight,
Is out of sight.*

*The idle Fool,
Is whipt at School.*

*As runs the Glass
Man's Life doth pass.*

*My Book and Heart
Shall never part.*

*Job feels the rod
Yet blesses God.*

*Our King the good
No man of blood.*

*The Lion bold,
The Lamb doth hold.*

*The Moon gives Light
In time of night.*

*Nightingales sing,
In time of Spring.*

*The Royal Oak,
it was the Tree,
That sav'd his
Royal Majesty.*

*Peter Denies
His Lord and cries.*

*Queen Esther comes
In Royal state
To save the Jews
from dismal fate.*

*Rachel doth mourn
For her first born.*

*Samuel anoints
Whom God appoints.*

*Time cuts down all,
Both great and small.*

*Uriah's beauteous Wife,
Made David seek his life.*

*Whales in the Sea
God's Voice obey.*

*Xerxes the great did die
and so must you & I.*

*Youth forward slips
Death soonest nips.*

*Zacheus he
Did climb the Tree
His Lord to see.¹*

Here is another :

*I in the Burying Place may see
Graves Shorter there than I;
From Death's Arrest no Age is free,
Young Children too may die;
My God, may such an awful sight,
Awakening be to me!
Oh! that by early Grace I might
For Death prepared be.²*

And here are some of the moral precepts :

GOOD CHILDREN MUST

<i>Fear God all Day</i>	<i>Love Christ alway</i>
<i>Parents obey</i>	<i>In Secret Pray</i>
<i>No False thing Say</i>	<i>Mind little Play</i>
<i>By no Sin Stray</i>	<i>Make no delay</i>

IN DOING GOOD

*Awake, arise, behold thou hast
Thy Life a Leaf, thy Breath a Blast;
At Night lye down prepar'd to have
Thy sleep, thy death, thy bed, thy grave.³*

¹ Ford, pp. 18-22.

² *Ibid.* p. 34.

³ *Ibid.* p. 51.

At no time in its entire career did Puritanism reign unopposed. One of Governor Bradford's first problems was the apparently willful Sabbath-breaking of his colonists, and later on he was confronted with the graver problem of the may-pole in his midst. "They also set up a May-pole," he wrote in great horror, "drinking and dancing about it many days together, inviting the Indian women, for their consorts, dancing and frisking together like so many fairies" and reviving "the beastly practices of the madd Bacchinalians."¹ I have already mentioned the activities of those heretics Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Shortly after them a convention of Puritans found that there were in the Massachusetts Bay Colony "eighty-two damnable errors."²

As time went on the opposition to the Puritan oligarchy grew in extent and in force. In large part this was due to the growth of the democratic spirit among the colonists, a growth for which the saints themselves were to blame. They did all they could to establish a theocracy — they denied political free speech and religious toleration —, but their ecclesiastical system contained within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. The democratic church-convention idea, brought over here by the Pilgrim Fathers and indorsed by the Winthrop colonists, had ingrained itself very deeply in the hearts of the people. When the Puritan oligarchs tried to abrogate it, the people, as in the case of the Thomas Hooker uprising, resisted, and before long began to yearn for even more ecclesiastical democracy. Not long after that they demanded also political democracy. King William finally had to give it to them, and not even the subtle theological arguments of Cotton Mather and John Eliot and the other rabid theocrats could keep it from them.

But a much more important cause of the collapse of the Puritan oligarchy was the rise of a highly prosperous middle class. The majority of the settlers, as I have said, were tradespeople. Little by little they exploited the resources of the land, and in the third quarter of the Seventeenth Century were growing rich. They were turning out shoes and iron works, and doing a big business in fishing, and distilling West Indian molasses into rum and exchanging it for slaves to be carried to the Southern plantations.³ Shipping was also flourish-

¹ "The History of Plymouth Plantation," by William Bradford. W. T. Davis edition. Boston. 1908. p. 237.

² Quoted by Fisher. Vol. I. p. 140.

³ The Beards. Vol. I. p. 58.

ing. "By the middle of the century New England vessels plied along every American shore, and made voyages to Europe and to the islands of the Atlantic."¹ Growing rich, the tradesmen, none of whom subscribed to the Puritan theology and all of whom were therefore disfranchised, demanded a say in the government, and in 1680 got it. Their wives in the meantime became restless under the harsh Puritan laws against all elegance and finery in dress. The news of the doings of the social leaders in Charleston, S. C., made them jealous. Now, with their husbands rich and in the possession of the vote, they broke loose, and one Sunday morning they came to church with ostrich feathers in their hats and fancy pleats in their dresses. The Puritan oligarchy died on that day.

But the saints had already left their indelible mark on the culture of the country. There is a legend that, despite their barbarous theology and their savage morality, they were devoted to learning and thus performed a service in the establishment of American literature. There is room for doubt about this. It is true that education was fostered in Massachusetts and the other New England Colonies to a degree unknown elsewhere on the continent at the time. It is true that book reading was almost universal, and that some booksellers made fortunes in their trade.² It is true that the first printing press was set up in Cambridge in 1639, and that the first university in this country, Harvard, was established in the same town three years earlier. But the people remained Puritans throughout. They read and discussed only theology. "In the absence, for the average citizen in New England, of almost any books other than theological, and of any intellectual stimulus other than the sermon, the earliest result of such education as the people received seems to have been mainly an intensified preoccupation with the problems of Calvinism, and a remarkable extension of the influence of the priesthood. The attitude of Massachusetts, in extirpating so far as possible, all ideas opposed to her official theology, in banishing those who persisted in giving expression to them, and in exercising a strict censorship over the only printing press in New England" nullified all possible good that could have been derived from her educational system.³

The England of the time was then enjoying the most glorious period in the entire history of her literature, and also the results of the re-

¹ "A History of the United States," by Edward Channing. Vol. I. p. 519.

² Fisher. Vol. I. p. 219.

³ "The Founding of New England," by Adams. p. 370.

searches of such scientists as Ray in zoölogy, Harvey in medicine, Newton and Boyle in physics, and Halley in astronomy. Yet the New Englanders, who were in steady communication with the mother country, heard nothing of all this magnificent intellectual flowering. They were not interested in science; they were interested only in the theological meaning of strange occurrences or, as they called them, "special providences." They were interested only in the problems of election and damnation.

And that was why everything they wrote was either out and out theology or strongly tinged with theological speculation. Even their annals, of which they had many more than the Southern Colonies, are interspersed with meditations on sin and Hell. The so-called histories of the early New England settlements by William Bradford and John Winthrop are usually spoken of with awe by the older historians, but the fact is that they have little æsthetic value, no more, in fact, than the relations by Captain John Smith or Alexander Whitaker. Even from the point of view of grammar they are not much better. The strictly theological works of the early New Englanders, which, as I have said, form the great bulk of their writings, are pretty difficult reading, to put it mildly. Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard, John Cotton and Cotton Mather were apparently more powerful as preachers than as writers, for their barbaric style must have been as difficult of comprehension to the people of their own time as it is now. The one theological writer who could write somewhat clear and at times highly effective English was Roger Williams. But he was not a Puritan.

Much more imaginative writing was done in New England in the Seventeenth Century than in the South, but nothing it ever produced in that time rose to the heights of "Bacon's Epitaph by His Man." Nearly everybody in Massachusetts, it seems, dabbled in verse, but most of it was only theological doggerel. This was true, not only of the efforts of the commoners, but also of those of the Oxford and Cambridge graduates, of whom there were many in Massachusetts then.

CHAPTER VII

New England

*The Annalists of New England
in the Seventeenth Century*

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The Annalists of New England in the Seventeenth Century

I. WILLIAM BRADFORD

THE EARLIEST KNOWN ANNALIST OF NEW ENGLAND WAS GOVERNOR William Bradford of the Plymouth Plantation. He was born in England in 1588, and came of yeoman stock. After a long illness, at about the age of twelve, he "became much impressed by the Scriptures and by the preaching of Clyfton,"¹ a celebrated local Puritan divine of those days. At once he began meditating over intricate questions of religion, the central one of which, to use his own words, was this: "Whether it was not his duty to withdraw from the Communion of the Parish Assemblies and engage with some Society of the Faithful that should keep close unto the written Word of God as the rule of their Worship."² At the age of seventeen he joined the congregation of the celebrated Scroby church that emigrated to Holland. There he engaged in the trade of fustian making, and married. Little is known about his life from then on till the arrival of the Plymouth Colony, of which he was a member, in New England in the middle of December, 1620.

Over here, he at once took a leading part in the planting of the Colony, and in this respect, which happens to be the only one, he resembled Captain John Smith in the latter's labors for the Virginia Colony. With Myles Standish he was one of the first to make expeditions among the Indians, from whom he obtained food and information concerning the country. Toward the end of the first year of settlement there was a great famine, and the colonists had to subsist entirely on fish and spring water, being entirely destitute of bread.

¹ Quoted in "Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation: 1606-1646," edited by William T. Davis. Edition of 1908. p. 5. All the following quotations from the history are from this edition, which will be designated hereafter simply as *Davis*.

² Quoted by Davis. p. 5.

Bradford managed to obtain great quantities of corn from the Indians, and thus probably saved the lives of all. A little later on he cured the Indian chief, Massasoit, of a sickness, and in that way obtained his lasting friendship, which proved to be a valuable asset to the settlers in their battles with the hostile tribes. It was not long after this Massasoit incident that he was chosen Governor of the Colony, to succeed John Carver, who died in April, 1621. He was reelected to office annually until the year of his death in 1657, except for five years, when he declined to accept.

He first appeared as an author in 1622, when a book entitled, "A Relation or Journal of the Beginnings and Proceedings of the English Plantation settled at Plymouth in New England," and known more generally as "Mourt's Relation," was published in London. It is known as "Mourt's Relation," because a man by that name wrote the preface to it. Its chief feature is a journal kept by William Bradford and Edward Winslow from the date of departure of the *Mayflower* from Old Plymouth on September 16, 1620, to March 23, 1621, when John Carver was chosen Governor. The rest of the book is made up of letters home and narratives of missions to the Indians, written by other hands.¹

Bradford's *magnum opus* was his so-called "History of Plymouth Plantation." It is really a chronicle, or, to be more accurate, a diary. Bradford began to write it in 1630, but he worked so slowly at it that in 1646 he was only up to 1621. In the next four years he reached 1646, and there he stopped. Neither he nor anybody else made any effort to have it published, and thus it disappeared from view for more than two centuries. The only reference made to it was by Bradford's nephew, Thomas Morton, in his "New England Memorial." It was in the middle of the last century that it was first discovered in the library of the Archbishop of London, and it was only in 1856 that it was first published in this country by the Massachusetts Historical Society. Beside the history Bradford also wrote a dialogue, entitled, "A Dialogue or the Sum of a Conference between some Young Men born in New England and Sundry Men that came out of Holland and Old England" (1648).

Bradford was an able administrator, and the historians have vied

¹ On page 14 Davis commits a curious error. He says of the Bradford history that it is "the foundation stone of American literature, the first book written by American settlers." This is plainly wrong, as a glance at the literature of the South in the Seventeenth Century will show. The Rev. Alexander Whitaker, who died in this country, wrote his "Good Newes from Virginia" in 1613, thirty-three years before Bradford finished his history.

with one another in praising him as such. He was also a man of much learning, both secular and sacred. "He had read much of history and philosophy, but theology was his favorite subject."¹ His "History of Plymouth Plantation" is unquestionably a document of the greatest historical value, and its discovery three quarters of a century ago is properly a matter of great jubilation. But the historians have not been satisfied to praise it as such alone; they have also professed to see in it a great piece of literature. Professor Edward Channing has said of it that it is written in "an English style singularly pure, strong and attractive,"² and Mr. James Truslow Adams is of the opinion that Bradford was "a writer of singularly pure English style."³ Long before both of these historians John Fiske had said that "The History of Plymouth Plantation" was "written in pure and vigorous English."⁴ The literary historians have generally agreed with these judgments. Professor Moses Coit Tyler maintained that Bradford was an "orderly, lucid and instructive"⁵ writer, and Mr. Charles F. Richardson was bold enough to state that some of Bradford's pages brought Milton to his mind.⁶

All of these judgments, I am inclined to think, are gross exaggerations. Bradford's was a dull personality, far removed from the picturesque and adventurous Captain John Smith, and his writing was of a like character. He remained the dreary Puritan, constantly in fear of his soul, throughout his life and throughout everything he did or wrote.

In the preface to "The History of Plymouth Plantation" he makes this simple profession of his purpose: "And first of the occasion and indusments there unto; the which that I may truly unfold, I must begin at the very roote and rise of the same. The which I shall endeavor to manefest in a plaine stile, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things, at least as my slender judgments can attaine the same."⁷ The first chapter deals with the Pilgrims in England, and is mainly composed of theological arguments against the "popish

¹ "Biographical Sketches of the Fathers of New England," by Mary Clark. Concord, N. H. 1836. p. 102.

² "A History of the United States," by Edward Channing. Vol. I. p. 295.

³ "The Founding of New England," by James Truslow Adams. p. 87.

⁴ "The Beginnings of New England," by John Fiske. N. Y. 1890. p. 72.

⁵ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 116.

⁶ "American Literature, 1607-1885," by Charles F. Richardson. Vol. I. p. 76. See also "The Puritan Tradition in American Literature," by Kenneth B. Murdock, in "The Reinterpretation of American Literature," edited by Norman Foerster. N. Y. 1928. p. 107.

⁷ Davis. p. 23.

and antichristian stuffe"¹ which he found so repulsive in the practices of the Established Church. The second chapter is entitled, "Of their departure into Holland and their trouble ther aboute, with some of the difficulties they found and mete withall." The writing in it is quite awkward, but there are passages in it that resound with the grim sincerity and determination of purpose of the Pilgrim Fathers. Perhaps the best of them is that describing the arrival of the Pilgrims on Cape Cod. It is full of obscurities and bad English, like what precedes it, but the experience it describes lives and throbs with all the hopes and anxieties of the participators:

Being thus arrived in a good harbor and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of heaven, who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the periles and miseries thereof, againe to set their feete on the firme and stable earth, their proper elemente. And no marvell if they were thus joyefull, seeing wise Seneca was so affected with sailing a few miles on the coast of his owne Italy; as he affirmed, that he had rather remaine twentie years on his way by land, then pass by sea to any place in a short time; so tedious and dreadfull was the same unto him.

But hear I cannot but stay and make a pause, and stand half amased at this poore peoples presente condition; and so I thinke will the reader too, when he well considers the same. Being thus passed the vast ocean, and a sea of troubles before in their preparation . . . , they had now no friends to wellcome them, nor inns to entertaine or refresh their weatherbeaten bodye, no houses or much less townes to repaire too, to seeke for succoure. It is recorded in Scripture as a mercie to the apostle and his shipwrecked company, that the barbarians shewed them no smale kindnes in refreshing them, but these savage barbarians, when they mette with them (as after will appeare) were readier to fill their sides full of arrows then otherwise. As for the season it was winter, and they that know the winters of that countrie know them to be sharp and violent, and subject to cruell and feirce stormes, deangerous to travill to known places, much more to serch an unknown coast. Besids, what could they see but a hidious and desolate wildernes, full of wild beasts and wild men? and

¹ Davis. p. 25.

what multitudes ther might be of them they knew not. Nether could they, as it were, goe up to the tope of Pisgah, to vew from this willdernes a more goodly cuntrie to feed their hops; for which way soever they turnd their eys (some upward to the heavens) they could have little solace or content in respecte of any outward objects.

For summer being done, all things stand upon them with a weatherbeaten face; and the whole cuntry, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage veiwe. If they looked behind them, ther was the mighty ocean which they had passed, and was now as a maine barr and goulfe to separate them from all the civil parts of the world. If it be said they had a ship to sucour them, it is true; but what heard they daly from the m^r and company? but that with sppede they should looke out a place with their shallop, wher they would be at some near distance; for the season was such as he would not stirr from thence till a safe harbor was discovered by them wher they would be, and he might go without danger; and that victells consumed apace, but he must and would keepe sufficient for themselves and thier returne. Yea, it was muttered by some, that if they gott not a place in time, they would turne them and their goods ashore and leave them. Let it also be considered that weake hopes of supply and succoure they left behind them, that might bear up their minds in this sade condition and trialls they were under; and they could not but be very smale.¹

Before landing at Plymouth the Pilgrims agreed upon a *modus vivendi*, and incorporated it in the so-called Mayflower Compact. It was the first legal document ever composed by the settlers of New England, and Bradford, who probably did the greater part of the actual writing, was the first annalist to allude to it. Its literary importance is nil, and no historian has ever claimed otherwise. Until about thirty years ago it was looked upon with great awe by legal scholars as the first democratic document composed in our history, but recent researches have shattered that legend completely.² But its primacy as a mere legal paper remains. Bradford's version of it follows:

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 95-97.

² "The Founding of New England," by James Truslow Adams. p. 98 ff.

In the name of God, Amen. We whose names are under-writen, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James, defender of the faith, etc., haveing undertaken, for the glorie of God, and advancemente of the Christian faith, and honour of our king and countrie, a voyage to plant the first colonie in the Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves togeather into a civill body politick, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid: and by vertue hearof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just and equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete and convenient for the generall good of the Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape-Codd the 11 of November, in the year of the raigne of our soveraigne lord, King James, of England, Franc, and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fiftie fourth, An^o: Dom. 1620.¹

The Pilgrims, like the first settlers of Virginia, in the beginning held their land and other possessions in common, but like them too, they found the scheme full of trouble. Bradford was unusually shrewd in his thinking on this matter:

The experience that was had in this commone course and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince the vanitie of that conceite of Platos and other ancients, applauded by some of later times;— that the taking away of propertie, and bringing in communitie into a comone wealth, would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser than God. For this comunitie (so far as it was) was found to breed much confusion and discontent, and retard much imployment that would have been to their benefit and comforte. For the yong-men that were most able and fitte for labour and service did repine that they should spend their time and streingth to worke for other mens wives and children, without any recompense. The strong, or man of parts, had no more in devission of victaills and cloaths, then he that was weake and not able to doe a quarter the other could; this was thought injustice. The aged

¹ Davis. p. 107.

and graver men to be ranked and equalised in labours, and vic-tails, cloaths, etc., with the meaner and yonger sorte, thought it some indignitie and disrespect unto them. And for mens wives to be commanded to doe servise for other men, as dresing their meate, washing their cloaths, etc., they deemed a kind of slaverie, neither could many husbands well brooke it.

Upon the poynte all being to have alike, and all to doe alike, they thought themselves in the like condition, and one as good as another; and so, if it did not cut of those relations that God hath set amongst men, yet it did at least much diminish and take of the mutuall respects that should be preserved amongst them. And would have been worse if they had been men of another condition. Let none objecte this is men's corruption, and nothing to the course it selfe. I answer, seeing all men have this corruption in them, God in his wisdome saw another course fiter for them.¹

One more quotation before putting the history aside. It deals with the trials and tribulations of life among the Indians, and is one of the most interesting and moving in the book:

This spring [1634], also, those Indians that lived aboute their trading house [it belonged to the Dutch along the Connecticut river] there fell sick of the small poxe, and died most miserably; for a soarer disease cannot befall them; they fear it more than the plague; for usually they that have this disease have them in abundance, and for wante of bedding and linning and other helps, they fall into a lamentable condition, as they lye on their hard matts, the poxe breaking and mattering, and running one into another, their skin cleaving (by reason thereof) to the matts they lye on; when they turne them, a whole side will flea of at once, (as it were) and they will all of a gore blood, most fearfull to behold; and then being very sore, what with could and other distempers, they dye like rotten sheep. The condition of this people was so lamentable, and they fell down so generally of this diseases, as they were (in the end) not able to help on another; nor, to make a fire, nor to fetch a little water to drinke, nor any to burie the dead; but would strivie as long as they could, and when they could procure no other means to make fire, they

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 146-147.

would burn the woden trayes and dishes they ate their meate in, and their very bowes and arrowes; and some would crawle out on all foure to gett a little water, and some times dye by the way, and not be able to gett in againe.

But those of the English house, (though at first they were afraid of infection,) yet seeing their woodfull and sadd condition, and hearing their pitiful cries and lamentations, they had compastion of them, and dayly fetched them wood and water, and make them fires, gott them victually, whilst they lived, and buried them when they dyed. For very few of them escaped, . . . But by the marvelous goodnes and providens of God not one of the English was so much as sicke, or in the least measure tainted with this disease. . . . And this mercie which they shewed them was kindly taken, and thankfully acknowledged of all the Indeans that knew or heard of the same.¹

There is nothing of special interest in "Mourt's Relation," and the same is true of Bradford's letter book. After his death the latter drifted about the country in some mysterious manner, and the first 338 pages of it were used by an English grocer in Halifax as wrapping paper, and thus lost forever. The portion extant begins on page 339, and makes dull reading. It has little value as history, and none whatever as literature. Bradford's "Dialogue" is between "young men" and "ancient," and deals exclusively with religious questions: who the Brownists were, how many of them were executed, the doings of the Pilgrims in Holland, who their leading spirits were, and so on.

It is plain from the foregoing quotations that there is nothing Mil-tonic about Bradford's prose, as Mr. Richardson wanted us to believe, and that he was not "a writer of pure and vigorous English," as James Truslow Adams thinks. Bradford was a kindly and pious man and an able administrator, but the gift of writing was simply not in him. He was almost always dull, and frequently very confused. He did possess vigor of a sort, but it was not the vigor of a clear, sharp mind, but rather that of a merciful and sincere heart. Of course, there have been duller books than the "History of Plymouth Plantation," but from a man like Bradford, who was a wide reader of the classics and English literature, something more properly describable as style was to be expected.²

¹ Davis. pp. 312-313.

² For a similar opinion see "A History of American Literature, 1607-1865," by William P. Trent. pp. 39-40.

2. NATHANIEL MORTON

Nathaniel Morton was the nephew of Bradford. He was born in England in 1613, and came to Plymouth ten years later. In 1645 he was elected secretary of the Colony, and held that office until his death forty-two years afterward. In 1669 he published in Cambridge, in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, "New England's Memorial: or, A Brief Relation of the Most Memorable and Remarkable Passages of the Providence of God, manifested to the Planters of New England in America: with special reference to the First Colony therof, called New-Plimouth." It had a great popularity in its day, and went through six editions. The greater part of it is based upon Bradford's history, but it is wrong to call Morton an impostor, as Professor Tyler¹ does, for he confesses the source of his information in his preface, which appeared with the first edition and all subsequent editions:

Were it so that any other had travelled in this kind in such a way as might have conducted to a brief and satisfactory intelligence in particulars relating to the premises, I would have spared this labor, and have satisfied myself in perusal of their works, rather than to have set pen to paper about the same; but having never seen or heard of any, especially respecting this our plantation of New Plimouth, which God hath honored to be the first in the land, I have made bold . . . to publish to the world, something of the very first beginnings of the great actions of God in New England, begun at New Plimouth: wherein the greatest part of my intelligence hath been borrowed from my much honored uncle, Mr. William Bradford, and such manuscripts as he left in his study, from the year 1620 unto 1646. . . . Certain diurnals of the honored Mr. Edward Winslow have also afforded me good light and help.²

The "Memorial" is really a very valuable work to the literary historian. It is the only source book that contains some of the earliest verse written in New England, including all that by Governor Bradford.

¹ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 126.

² "New England's Memorial," by Nathaniel Morton. Edited by Sewall Harding. Boston.

3. EDWARD WINSLOW

Edward Winslow, the other person to whom Nathaniel Morton acknowledged indebtedness for information for the writing of his "Memorial," performed great services to the Plymouth Colony, and was generally a man of much enterprise. Roger Williams spoke of him as "that great and pious soul." He was descended from a landed family in Worcestershire, and was born there in 1595.¹ In 1617 he joined the Separatist Church in Leyden, and came to this country in the *Mayflower*. He owned much land here, and took a leading part in the affairs of the Colony. He explored the Boston harbor, was among the first to trade with the Dutch, and maintained a close friendship with the Indian chief Massasoit.

In 1623 he went to England as agent for the Colony, and the year following published there "Good Newes from England; or a True Relation of things very remarkable at the Plantation of *Plimouth* in New England. Shewing the wondrous providence and goodness of God, in their preservation and continuance, *being delivered* from many apparent deaths and dangers." He went to England many times afterward. In 1643 he represented Plymouth at the meetings of the Confederation of the United Colonies of New England, and in 1645 he was president of the Council of War at Plymouth.

A year later he published in London his most important book: "Hypocrisie Unmasked, or a True Relation of the Proceedings of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts against Samuel Gorton (and his Accomplices) a notorious disturber of the Peace and quiet of the severall Governments wherein he lived: With the grounds and reasons thereof, examined and allowed by their Generall Court holden at *Boston* in *New-England* last, 1646." He also wrote a two and a half page pamphlet entitled, "The True Grounds of the First Planting of New England." It is a brief historical sketch, very badly written, and has no value of any sort. He was also probably the author of "A Journey to Pakanokit, the habitation of the Great King Massasoit; as also our message, and entertainment we had of him." There is some fair writing in it.² He also wrote "An Account of the Natives of

¹ For the biographical material on Winslow I rely on the account in "Old-time New England, The Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities." Vol. XI. p. 99 ff.

² See especially p. 364 ff. in the Sewall Harding edition, which is included in his edition of Nathaniel Morton's "New England's Memorial."

New England." It deals with the government, religion, language and soil of the country; it is of slight importance.

Winslow's most important book was his aforementioned "Hypocrisy Unmasked." It was a reply to the charges made by one Samuel Gorton and his accomplices that the colonists were packing juries and not administering justice according to the principles of the Common Law. Gorton stirred up considerable dissension in the Colonies, and was *persona non grata* in every one of them. To revenge himself he published in England the full text of his charges, and thus created unfriendly feeling toward the colonists. Winslow was at the time in London, and he at once set to answering these charges in "Hypocrisy Unmasked." It was a singularly temperate answer, and not badly written. Here is an excerpt, picked from the beginning:

I know the world is full of controversies and tis my great greife to see my dear native country so engaged in them, especially one godly person against another. 'Tis my present comfort I come not to accuse any; but to defend *New-England* against the injurious complaints of *Samuel Gorton*, &c. but as it comes to passe oftentimes that men wound others unavoidably in defending their persons from the violent assaults of such as draw upon them, which other wise they would never have done: for if Mr. *Gorton* receive any such hurt (which is unavoidable) he becomes an accessory thereunto; by forcing me to defend the Country, without which I should bee unfaithful.

I know the world is too full of bookes of this kinde, and therefore however I am unfitted of many things I have and could procure at home would well become a relation of the late and present state of *New-England*, yet I shall now only with as great brevity as may bee give answer to such injurious complaints as hee maketh of us. And however his Title, Preface, and every leafe of his booke may be justly found fault with I shall clearly answer to matters of fact, such as hee chargeth the severall Governments withall, so as any indifferent Reader may easily discern how grossly we are abused.¹

Winslow was one of the most picturesque characters among the Pilgrim Fathers, far more so, indeed, than Governor Bradford. He

¹ "Hypocrisy Unmasked," by Edward Winslow. Published by the Club for Colonial Reprints. Providence. 1916. p. 64.

labored generously for the Colony, and was quite as capable a writer as Bradford. It is thus rather strange that Tyler gives him only a few brief paragraphs, and that "The Cambridge History of American Literature" ignores him almost completely. He surely deserves greater recognition. If there were any great men among the settlers of Plymouth he certainly was one of them.

4. THOMAS MORTON

Thomas Morton was the bane of the Puritans during all his life. Governor Bradford found plenty to worry about in him, especially in his hellish predilection for such pagan things as may-poles. He was probably born sometime in the last quarter of the Sixteenth Century. He was a genuine Cavalier and a member of the Church of England, and in the early years of the Plymouth Plantation established a trading post at Mount Wollaston, or Merry Mount. There he traded with the Indians, and partook of the charms of the squaws in a manner not strictly in compliance with the dictates of the Bible. With his companions he drank and ate heartily, made merry and prayed extraordinarily little for those times. The Puritan divines were his pet aversions, and he heaped upon them all manner of ridicule.

Twice the Pilgrims seized him, and twice they transported him to England, for no other offense than that he had displeased them, but he returned on each occasion, to the despair of Governor Bradford and the other holy souls. Their plight was the greater because it was impossible to bring him to trial, for he really had committed no offense punishable under English law. While in England he allied himself with the enemies of the Plymouth Colony, and his one book, "New English Canaan" he apparently wrote for the purpose of aiding this party. It was published in Amsterdam in 1637.

Morton was not the "careless, haphazard writer"¹ that some literary historians think he was. He wrote much more clearly and effectively than any of his Puritan contemporaries, and he possessed wit beyond the average. The full title of his one book is: "New English Canaan; or New Canaan, containing an abstract of New England. Composed in Three Bookes. The first setting forth the Originall of the Natives, their Manners and Customs. Together with their tract-

¹ "A History of American Literature," by William B. Cairns. N. Y. 1912. p. 31.

able Nature and Love toward the English. II. The Natural Indowments of the Countrie, and what Staple Commodities it yieldeth. III. What people are planted there, their Prosperity, what remarkable Accidents have happened since the first planting of it; together with their Tenents and Practise of their Church.”¹

Morton presents himself in his full colors in the first part of his book, that dealing with the “Originall of the Natives”:

In the yeare since the incarnation of Christ, 1622, it was my chance to be landed in the parts of New England, where I found two sortes of people, the one Christians, the other Infidels, these I found most full of humanity, and more friendly then the other: as shall hereafter be made apparent in Dew Course, by their severall actions from time to time, whilst I lived among them. After my arrivall in those parts, I endeavoured by all the wayes and meanes that I could find out from what people and nation, the Natives of New England might be conjectured originally to proceede, & by continuance & conversation amongst them, I attaned to so much of their language, as by all probable conjecture may make the same manifest, for it hath been found by divers, and those of good judgment that the Natives of this Country, doe use very many wordes both of Greeke and Latine, to the same signification that the Latins and Greekes have done, . . . Now I am bold to conclude the originall of the Natives of New England may be well conjectured to be from the scattered Trojans, after such time as Brutus departed from Latium.”²

That he was fond of the Indians appears also from the following two passages: (a) “According to humane reason guided onely by the light of nature, these peoples leades the more happy and freer life, being voyde of care, which torments the mindes of so many Christians: They are not delighted in baubles, but in usefull things.”³ (b) “I have found the Massachusetts Indian more full of humanity, then the Christians, & have had much better quarter with them; yet I observed not their humours, but they mine. . . . The more Salvages the better quarter, the more Christians the worser quarter I found, as all the indifferent minded Planters can testifie.”⁴

¹ Force's Collection of Tracts and Other Papers. Vol. II. No. 5.

² *Ibid.* pp. 15-18.

³ *Ibid.* p. 40.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 42.

The may-pole business, which offended Governor Bradford so much, gave him a good opportunity to have some fun with the Puritans. He explained it all thus:

The inhabitants of Parsonageessit (having translated the name of their habitation from that ancient Salvage name to Ma-are Mount; and being resolved to have the new name confirmed for a memorial to after ages) did devise amongst themselves to have it performed in a solemn manner with Revels, & merriment after the old English custome: prepared to set up a Maypole upon the festivall day of Philip and Iacob; & therefore brewed a barrell of excellent beare, & provided a case of bottles to be spent, with other good cheare, for all commers of that day. And because they would have it a compleat forme, they had prepared a song fitting to the time and present occasion. And upon May-day they brought the Maypole to the place appointed, with drummes, gunnes, pistols, and other fitting instruments, for that purpose; and there erected it with the help of Salvages, that came thether of purpose to see the manner of our Revels. A goodly pine tree of 80. foote long, was reared up, with a peare of buckshorns nayled one, somewhat neare unto the top of it: . . .

And because it should more fully appeare to what end it was placed there, they had a poem in readiness made, which was fixed to the Maypole, to shew the new name confirmed upon that plantation; which allthough it were made according to the occurrents of the time, it being Enigmatically composed) passelled the Separatists most pitifully to expound it, which (for the better information of the reader) I have here inserted.

THE POEM

*Rise Oedipus, and if thou canst unfould,
What meanes Coribdis underneath the mould,
When Scilla solitary on the ground,
(Sitting in forme of Niobe) was found;
Till Amphitrites Darling did acquaint,
Grim Neptune with the Tenor of her plaint,
And caused him send forth Triton with the sound,
Of trumpet lowd, at which the seas were found,*

*So full of Protean formes, that the bold shore,
 Presented Scilla a new parramore,
 So strange as Sampson and so patient,
 As Job himselfe, directed thus, by fate,
 To comfort Scilla so unfortunate.
 I doe professe by Cupids beautilous mother,
 Heres Scogans choise for Scilla, and none other;
 Though Scilla's sick with Greife because no signe,
 Can there be found of vertue masculine.
 Esculapius come. I know right well,
 His Laboure's lost when you may ring her knell,
 The fatall sisters doome none can withstand,
 Nor cithereas powre, who poynts to land,
 With proclamation that the first of May,
 At Ma-re Mount shall be kept hollyday.¹*

This incident, of course, roused the ire of the Puritans. They called the may-pole an idol and the calf of Horeb. But Morton answered with the taunt that they did not understand the poem. He continued his narrative thus:

There was likewise a merry song made, which (to make their Revells more fashionable) was sung with a Corus, every man bearing his part; which they performed in a daunce, hand in hand about the Maypole, whiles one of the Company sung, and filled out the good liquor like gammedes and lupiter.

THE SONGE

*Drinke and be merry, merry, merry boyes,
 Let all your delight be in Hymens ioyes,
 Jô to Hyman now the day is come,
 About the merry Maypole take a Roome.*

*Make greene garlons, bring bottles out;
 And fill sweet Nectar, freely about,
 Vncover thy head, and feare no harme,
 For hers good liquor to keep it warme.*

¹ Force's Collection of Tracts and Other Papers. Vol. II. No. 5. pp. 90-91.

Then drinke and be merry, &c.

Jô to Hymen, etc.

*Nectar is a thing assign'd,
By the Deities owne minde,
To cure the hart opprest with greife,
And of good liquors is the cheife.*

Then drinke, &c.

Jô to Hyman, &c.

*Give to the Mellancolly man,
A cup or two of't now and than;
This physick's will soone revive his bloud,
And make him be of a merrier moode.*

Then drink, &c.

Jô to Hyman, &c.

*Give to the Nyphe thats free from scorne,
No Irish stuff nor Scotch over worne,
Lasses in beaver coats come away,
Yee shall be welcome to us night and day.*

To drinke and be merry, &c.

Jô to Hyman, &c.

"This harmless mirth," said Morton, "made by younge men (that lived in hope to have wives brought over to them, that would save them a laboure to make a voyage to fetch them over) was much distasted, of the precise Separatists: that keepe much a doc, about than reason would require about things that are indifferent."¹

The rest of "New England Canaan" Morton devotes to biting satire on the Pilgrim Fathers. He begins his onslaught with the remark that the Puritans had learned "to make a great shew of Religion, but no humanity."² And he continues his denunciation by piling one damning incident on top of another. Here is the first:

The Church of Plimmouth having due regard to the weale publique, and the Brethren, that were to come over; and knowing that they would be busily employed to make provision for the cure of Soules, and therefore might neglect the body for that time: did hold themselves to be duety bound, to make search for a fitting

¹ Force's Collection of Tracts and Other Papers. Vol. II. No. 5. pp. 91-92.

² *Ibid.* p. 97.

man that might be able (if so neede requir'd) to take the chardge upon him in that place of imployment: and therefore called a Counsell of the whole Synagogue; amongst which company they chose out a man, that long time had bin nurst up in the tender bosome of the Church: one that had speciall gifts: hee could wright and reade, nay more: hee had tane the oath of objuration, which is a speciall stepp, yea and a maine degree unto preferment, Him they weane: and out of Phaos boxe fitt him with speciall guifts of no lesse worth: they stile him Doctor and forth they send him to gaine imployment and opinion. What luck is it I cannot hit on his name; but I will give you him by a periphrasis, that you may know him when you meet him next.

Hee was born a Wrington in the County of Somerset, where hee was bred a Butcher. Hee weares a longe beard, and a Garment like the Greeke that beggd in Pauls Church, This new made Doctor comes to Salem to congratulate; where hee findes some are newly come from Sea, and ill at ease.

Hee takes the patient and the urinall: vies the State there: fines the Crasis Syptomes, and the attomi natantes; and tells the patient that his disease was winde, which hee had tane by gapeing, feasting, overboard at Sea, but hee would quickly ease him of that greife, and quite expell the winde. And this hee did performe, with his gifts hee had: and then hee handled the patient so handsomely, that he eased him of all the winde, hee had in an instant.

And yet I hope this man may be forgiven, if hee were made a fitting Plant for Heaven. . . .

By this meanes hee was allowed 4.p. a moneth, and chirgeons chest, and made Phisition generall of Salem: where hee exercised his gifts so well, that of full 42. that there he took to cure, there is not one has more cause to complaine, or can say black's his eie. . . . and yet I hope this man may be forgiven, if they were all made fitting plants for Heaven.

But in mine opinion, hee deserves to be set upon a palfrey, and lead up and downe in triumph throw new Canaan, with a coler of Iurdans about his neck, as was one of like desert in Richard the seconds time through the streets of London, that men might know where to finde a Quacksalver."¹

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 101-102.

The other instances are written up in a like tone, and full of the same poison, and finally Morton gathers himself together and lets off this blast:

The Church of Separatists, is governed by Pastors, Elders, and Deacons, and there is not any of these (though hee be but a Cow keeper) but is allowed to exercise his gifts, in the publik assembly on the Lords day; so as hee doe not make use of any notes for the help of his memory: for such things they say smell of Lampe oyle, and there must be no such unsavory perfume admitted, to come into the congregation.

These are all publike preachers. There is amongst these people a Deakonesse made of the sisters, that uses her gifts at home in an assembly of her sex, by way of repetition, or exhortation: such is their practice.

The pastor (before hee is allowed of) must disclaime his former calling to the Ministry, as hereticall; and take a new calling after their fantastick inventions: and then hee is admitted to bee their Pastor.

The manner of disclaimeing is to renounce his calling with bitter execrations, for the time that hee hath heretofore lived in it: and after his new election, there is great joy conceived at his commission. . . .

Of these pastors I have not knowne many: some I have observed; together with their carriage in New Canaan: and can inform you what opinion hath I conceived of their conditions in the perticuler. There is one who (as they give it out there, that thinke they speake it to advance his worth) has bin expected to exercise his gifts in an assembly, that stayed his coming, (in the midst of his Torrey) falls into a fitt (which they terme a zealous meditation) and was 4. miles past the place appointed before hee came to himselfe, or did remember whereabouts hee went. And how much these things are different from the actions of mazed men, I leave to any indifferent man to judge; and if I should say, they are all much alike, they that have seen and heard, what have done will not condemne me altogether.¹

The liveliness of Morton's observation and the picturesque life of his beloved Merry Mount have attracted the attention of several

¹ Force's Collection of Tracts and Other Papers. Vol. II. No. 5. pp. 115-116.

romancers. Hawthorne's story "The May-Pole of Merry Mount" is well known, and John Lothrop Motley's "Merry Mount" almost as much. But all the literary historians, without a single exception, have agreed that Morton was a distinctly disturbing influence and that such as he could do only harm in a beginning Colony. For example, Mr. Richardson says of him that "when all has been said in his favor, it must be admitted that he and his band were not men of a sort desirable when a state is to be established,"¹ and Professor Cairns is of the opinion that Bradford was right when he remarked of Morton: "But I have been too long about so unworthy a person and bad a cause."²

These judgments, it seems to me, do a great injustice to the memory of Morton. He deserves better of posterity. He was no master of English prose, but neither was Bradford nor Captain Smith nor, for that matter, even John Winthrop. He probably was not an able administrator, but he was something far more valuable. He was an intelligent and well-disposed man. There was a joyousness about him that the stern, Hell-dreading Puritans might have emulated with much profit. And there was in him so shrewd an eye for the frauds about him, especially among the Pilgrim divines, that the colonists could have learned much from him had they taken him seriously.

5. JOHN WINTHROP

John Winthrop came of the gentry, and was born in 1588. He attended Trinity College, but had to leave at the age of seventeen, when he suddenly married an heiress. She died in 1615, so in a few months he married again. His second wife lived only a year, and so he married a third. She died too, so he married for the fourth and last time — his wife outlived him in this round. Winthrop was a Separatist, and of a very fanatical sort. He was given to religious introspection from an early age. In 1606 he began a series of notes, "Experientia," dealing with the adventures of his soul, and in the same year he covenanted with the Lord to reform "these sins by his grace, pride, covetousness, love of this world, vanity of mind, unthankfulness, sloth, both in his service and in my calling. . . . God give me grace to per-

¹ "American Literature," by Richardson. Vol. I. p. 99.

² "A History of American Literature," by William B. Cairns. p. 33.

form my promise, and I doubt not but he will perform his, God make it fruitful. Amen."¹

Winthrop came from a family of pious journal writers, and he himself was very much one. Even his letters dealing with the ordinary occasions of life are clouded by a Calvinistic piety. As one of the motives for his coming over here he gave the following in his notebook, "Reasons": "[Carrying the gospel into America and erecting] a bulwark against the kingdom of anti-Christ which the Jesuits labor to rear up in those parts."² But being a man of property and affairs he also considered the economic and social reasons for the expedition: "the overpopulation of England, which is so great that man, the most precious of all creatures, is here more vile and base than the earth we tread upon . . . , and thus it is come to pass, that children, servants and neighbors, especially if they be poor, are counted the greatest burdens, which if things were right would be the chiefest earthly blessing."³

On the voyage over here Winthrop wrote a small booklet of homely religious and moral admonitions, entitled, "A Model of Christian Charity," and also began the journal which he kept till shortly before his death, and which he called "A Historie of New England." The title is a misnomer in two particulars. The book is not a history, but rather a comprehensive diary, and it treats not of all of New England, but mainly of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It was originally written in three notebooks. The first two were found shortly after his death, but the third was discovered only in 1816. The whole was then transcribed by James Savage, whose edition has ever since been the standard one.

Winthrop was more the man of affairs than Bradford, and thus his history is generally more urbane and less pious than the latter's account of the Plymouth Plantation. Being an attorney, a landowner and a university-educated man, he took a leading part in the establishment of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and was elected its Governor almost as regularly as Bradford was in the sister Colony. He was an able executive, though at times too harsh a one, and probably deserves all the praise that has been heaped upon him by the political

¹ Quoted in "A History of the United States," by Channing. Vol. I. p. 325.

² Quoted in *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 325.

³ Quoted in *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 327. I am not making any use here of the only biography of Winthrop, "John Winthrop, First Governor of Massachusetts," by James Twichell, Boston, 1892, because the author is so fanatically pro-Winthrop that one may be forgiven for doubting many of his facts.

historians. His history is of the highest documentary value, but as a piece of writing it ranks somewhat lower. Winthrop wrote smoothly, much more so than any of the other Plymouth annalists, but seldom with much fire. He is generally quite dull and never achieves even the modest graphic qualities of Bradford. Like the other Puritan chiefs he was completely lacking in humor, and a firm believer in special providences.

The first part of the history deals with the voyage, and is sluggish reading. Here are two typical passages:

Friday. . . . The wind W.S.W., thick, foggy weather, and in the afternoon rainy. We stood W. by S. and after W. and by N. about five leagues a watch. We were in forty-four and a half. The sun set N.W. and by N. one third northerly. And towards night we stood W. . . .

Monday. . . . The wind at S. a fine gale and fair weather. We stood W. and by S. We saw a great drift; so we heaved out our skiff, and it proved a fir log, which seemed to have been many years in the water, for it was all overgrown with barnacles and other trash. We sounded here and found no ground at one hundred fathom and more. We saw two whales. About nine at night the wind grew very strong at S.W. and continued so, with much rain, till one of the clock; then it ceased raining, but the wind came to the W. with more violence. In this storm we were forced to take in all our sails, save our mainsail, and to lower that so much as we could.¹

So the narrative hobbles along page after page until after the landing. Then follows a curious conglomeration of commonplace news items and reports of important political happenings. A typical batch:

A fast at Newton, where Mr. Hooker was chosen pastor, and Mr. Stone teacher, in such a manner as before at Boston.

The wolves continued to do much hurt among our cattle; and this month, by Mr. Grant, there came over four Irish greyhounds, which were sent to the governor by Mr. Downing, his brother-in-law. . . .

This year a watermill was built at Roxbury, by Mr. Dummer. . . .

¹ Winthrop's "History of New England," edited by James Kendall Hosmer. N. Y. 1908. Vol. I. pp. 40-41.

At . . . Pascataquack, a company having made a fire at a tree, one of them said, Here this tree will fall, and here I will lie; and accordingly it fell upon him and killed him. . . .

It pleased the Lord to give special testimony of his presence in the church of Boston, after Mr. Cotton was called to office there. More were converted and added to that church, than to all the other churches in the bay, (or rather the lake, for so it were more properly termed, the bay being that part of sea without between the two capes, Cape Cod and Cape Ann). Divers profane and notorious evil persons came and confessed their sins, and were comfortably received into the bosom of the church. Yea, the Lord gave witness to the exercise of prophecy, so as thereby some were converted, and others much edified. Also, the Lord pleased greatly to bless the practice of discipline, wherein he gave the pastor, Mr. Wilson, a single gift, to the great benefit of the church.

After much deliberation and serious advice, the Lord directed the teacher, Mr. Cotton, to make it clear by the scripture, that the minister's maintenance, as well as all other charges of the church, should be defrayed out of a stock or treasury, which was to be raised out of the weekly contribution; which accordingly was agreed upon.¹

Religious problems, of course, take up the largest part of the history, and, indeed, there is hardly an incident mentioned without some religious interpretation, or at least query, put upon it:

At the lecture at Boston a question was propounded about veils. Mr. Cotton concluded, that where (by the custom of the place) they were not a sign of the women's subjection, they were not commanded by the apostle. Mr. Enddecott opposed, and did maintain it by the general arguments brought by the apostle. After some debate, the governor, perceiving it to grow to some earnestness, interposed, and so it brake off.

Among other testimonies of the Lord's gracious presence with his own ordinances, there was a youth of fourteen years of age (being the sone of one of the magistrates) so wrought upon by the ministry of the word, as for divers months, he was held under

¹ Winthrop's "History of New England," edited by James Kendall Hosmer. N. Y. 1908. Vol. I. pp. 111-116.

such affliction of mind, as he could not be brought to apprehend any comfort in God, being much humbled and broken for his sins, (though he had been a dutiful child and not given to the lusts of youth,) and especially for his blasphemous and wicked thoughts, whereby Satan buffeted him, so as he went mourning and languishing daily; yet, attending to the means, and not giving over prayer, and seeking counsel, etc., he came at length to be freed from his temptations, and to find comfort in God's promises, and so, being received into the congregation, upon good proof of his understanding in the things of God, he went on cheerfully in a Christian course, falling daily to labor, as a servant and as a younger brother of his did, who was no wit short of him in the knowledge of God's will, though his youth kept him from daring to offer himself to the congregation. —

Upon this occasion it is not impertinent (though no credit nor regard be to be had of dreams in these days) to report a dream, which the father of these children had at the same time, viz., that, coming into his chamber, he found his wife (she was a very gracious woman) in bed, and three or four of their children lying by her, with most sweet and smiling countenances, with crowns upon their heads, and blue ribbons about their leaves. When he awaked, he told his wife his dream, and made this interpretation of it, that God would take of her children to make them fellow heirs with Christ in his kingdom.¹

Shortly after these observations Winthrop goes into a discussion of the violent dispute engendered by Mrs. Hutchinson² throughout the whole of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It is pretty difficult reading, for few people of the time understood precisely what the fight was about — Mrs. Hutchinson's theological views were perhaps the most abstruse ever let loose in this world —, and Governor Winthrop

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 120-121.

² Perhaps this is a good place to mention the Winthrop pamphlet, "A Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familists & Libertines, that infected the Churches of New England: And how they were confuted by the Assembly of ministers there: As also of the Magistrates proceedings in Court against them." The authorship of this pamphlet, which deals exclusively with the controversy over Mrs. Hutchinson, has long been a matter of dispute. Savage maintained that its real author was one Thomas Welde, a Roxbury minister, whose name is affixed to the preface, and who was one of the authors, of the Bay Psalm Book. But equally reliable investigators such as Charles Deane, Samuel G. Drake, J. G. Palfrey, Joseph B. Felt and Charles Francis Adams, have held that it was the work of Governor Winthrop, and their view is now generally accepted.

plainly was not one of them. But there are certain incidents recorded which present a good picture of the intellectual temper of those days. For example; "The wife of one William Dyer, a milliner in the New Exchange, a very proper and fair woman, and both of them notoriously infected with Mrs. Hutchinson's errors, and very censorious and troublesome, (she being a very proud spirit, and much addicted to revelations,) had been delivered of child some few months before, . . . and the child buried, (being stillborn,) and viewed of none but Mrs. Hutchinson and the midwife, one Hawkins's wife, a rank familist also; and another woman had a glimpse of it, who, not being able to keep counsel, as the other two did, some rumor began to spread, that the child was a monster."¹ This, plainly, was something to be looked into, so a long investigation was begun, and finally Mr. Cotton put his mind to work on the problem, and the grand conclusion was that the lack of orthodoxy in the parents was the cause of the child being born a monster.

The remainder of the history is made up of ordinary news items, lengthy reports of executions and adultery trials, and descriptions of special providences. Since the latter are of extra value in shedding light on the mentality of the time, it is worth while to quote some of them.

About this time there fell out a thing worthy of observation. Mr. Winthrop the younger, one of the magistrates, having many books in a chamber wher there was corn of divers sorts, had among them one wherein the Greek testament, the psalms and the common prayer were bound together. He found the common prayer eaten with mice, every leafe of it, and not any of the two other touched nor any other of his books, though there were above a thousand.²

One John Baker, a member of the church of Boston, removing from thence to Newbury for enlargement of his outward accomodation, being grown wealthy from nothing, grew there very disordered, fell into drunkenness and such violent contention with another brother, maintaining the same by lying, and other evil courses, that the magistrates sent to have him apprehended. But he rescued himself out of the officer's hands and removed to Acomenticus, where he continued near two years, and now at

¹ Winthrop's "History of New England," edited by James Kendall Hosmer. N. Y. 1908. Vol. I. p. 266.

² *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 18. Savage, in his comment on this mice passage, says that Winthrop was of the opinion that the rodents were dissenters, believers in Mrs. Hutchinson's ideas.

this time he came to Boston, and humbled himself before the church, confessing all his wickedness, with many tears, and showing how he had been followed with Satan, and how he had labored to pacify his conscience by secret confessions to God, etc., but could have no peace; yet could not bring his heart to return and make acknowledgment, until the hand fell upon one Swain his neighbor, who fell into despair, and would often utter dreadful speeches against himself, and cry out that he was all in fire under the wrath of God, but never discover any other heinous sin, but that having gotten about £40 by his labor, he went into England and there spent it in wicked company, and so continued, and after a small time hanged himself. This Baker coming in, and seeing him thus dead, was so struck with it as he could have no rest, till he came and made his peace with the church and court. . . . Yet this man fell into gross distempers soon after.¹

It may be of use to mention a private matter or two, which fell out about this time, because the power and mercy of the Lord did appear in them in extraordinary manner. One of the deacons of Boston church, Jacob Eliot, (a man of very sincere heart and an humble frame of spirit,) had a daughter of eight years of age, who being playing with other children about a cord, the hinder end thereof fell upon the child's head, and an iron sticking out of it struck into the child's head, and drove a piece of the skull before it into the brain, so as the brains came out, and seven surgeons (some of the country, very experienced men, and others of the ships, which rode in the harbor) being called together for advice, etc., did all conclude, that it was the brains, (being about half a spoonful at one time, and more at other times,) and that there was no hope of the child's life, except the piece of skull could be drawn out. But one of the ruling elders of the church, an experienced and very skilful surgeon, liked not to take that course, but applied only plasters to it; and withal earnest prayers were made by the church to the Lord for it, and in six weeks it pleased God that the piece of skull consumed, and so came forth, and the child recovered perfectly; nor did it lose the senses at any time.

Another was the child of one Bumstead, a member of the church, had a child of about the same age, that fell from a gallery in the meeting house about eighteen feet high, and break the

¹ *Ibid.* Vol. II. pp. 29-30.

arm and shoulder, (and was also committed to the Lord in the prayers of the church, with earnest desires, that the place where his people assembled to worship might not be defiled with blood,) and it pleased the Lord also that this child was soon perfectly recovered.¹

Of course, there were certain special providences that the Puritans could not fathom. Winthrop lists many of them. For example: (a) "Quere, of the child at Cambridge killed by a cat."² (b) "At Ipswich there was a calf brought forth with one head, and three mouths, three noses, and six eyes. What these prodigies portended the Lord only knows, which in his due time he will manifest."³ (c) "At Concord a bullock was killed which had in its maw a ten shilling piece of English gold, and yet it could not be known that any had lost it."⁴

Toward the end of his history Winthrop presents the speech he delivered before the General Court after his acquittal of a charge of exceeding his power as Deputy-Governor. It is a gravely eloquent speech, full of nobility and pathos, but Professor Tyler sees in it much more. He thinks that as a piece of political philosophy it is "worthy of being placed by the side of the weightiest and most magnanimous sentences of John Locke or Algernon Sidney," and he refers to an anonymous American publicist who declared that the definition of liberty which it contains "is the best . . . in the English language, and that in comparison with it what Blackstone says about liberty seems puerile."⁵

The complete speech follows:

I suppose that something may be expected from me, upon this charge that is befallen me. Which moves me to speak now to you; yet I intend not to intermeddle in the proceedings of the court, or with any of the persons concerned therein. Only I bless God, that I see an issue of this troublesome business. I also acknowledge the justice of the court, and, for mine own part, I am well satisfied, I was publicly charged, and I am publicly and legally acquitted, which is all I did expect or desire. And though this be

¹ Winthrop's "History of New England," edited by James Kendall Hosmer. N. Y. 1908. Vol. II. pp. 209-210.

² *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 18.

³ *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 264.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 326.

⁵ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 135.

sufficient for my justification before men, yet not so before the God, who hath seen so much amiss in my dispensations (and even in this affair) as calls me to be humble. For to be publicly and criminally charged in this court, is matter of humiliation, (and I desire to make a right use of it,) notwithstanding I be thus acquitted. If her father hath spit in her face, (saith the Lord concerning Miriam,) should she not have been ashamed seven days? Shame had lien upon her, whatever the occasion had been. I am unwilling to stay you from your urgent affairs, yet give me leave (upon this special occasion) to speak a little more to this assembly. It may be of some good use, to inform and rectify the judgments of some of the people, and may prevent such distempers as have arisen amongst us.

The great questions that have troubled the country, are about the authority of the magistrates and the liberty of the people. It is yourselves who have called us to this office, and being called by you, we have our authority from God, in way of an ordinance, such as hath the image of God eminently stamped upon it, the contempt and violation whereof hath been vindicated with examples of divine vengeance. I entreat you to consider, that when you choose magistrates, you take them from among yourselves, men subject to like passions as you are. Therefore when you see infirmities in us, you should reflect upon your own, and that would make you bear the more with us, and not be severe censurers of the failings of your magistrates, when you have continual experience of the like infirmities in yourselves and others. We account him a good servant who breaks not his covenant. The covenant between you and us is the oath you have taken of us, which is to this purpose, that we shall govern you and judge your causes by the rules of God's laws and our own, according to our best skill. When you agree with a workman to build you a ship or house, etc., he undertakes as well for his skill as for his faithfulness, for it is his profession, and you pay him for both. But when you call one to be a magistrate, he doth not profess nor undertake to have sufficient skill for that office, nor can you furnish him with gifts, etc., therefore you must run the hazard of his skill and ability. But if he fail in faithfulness, which by his oath he is bound unto, that he must answer for. If it fall out that the case be clear to common apprehension, and the rule clear also, if he transgress here, the error is not his skill, but in the error of the will: it must

be required of him. But if the case be doubtful, or the rule doubtful, to men of such understanding and parts as your magistrates are, if your magistrates should err here, yourselves must bear it.

For the other point concerning liberty, I observe a great mistake in the country about that. There is a twofold liberty, natural (I mean as our nature is now corrupt) and civil or federal. The first is common to man with beasts and other creatures. By this, man, as he stands in relation to man simply, hath liberty to do what he lists; it is a liberty to evil as well as to good. This liberty is incompatible and inconsistent with authority, and cannot be the least restraint of the most just authority. The exercise and maintaining of this liberty makes men grow more evil, and in time to be worse than brute beasts: *omnes sumus licentia deteriores*. This is that great enemy of truth and peace, that wild beast, which all the ordinances of God are bent against, to restrain and subdue it. The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal, it may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man, in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions, amongst men themselves. This liberty is the proper end and object of authority, and cannot subsist without it; and it is a liberty to that only which is good, just and honest. This liberty you are to stand for, with the hazard (not only of your goods, but) of your lives, if need be. Whatsoever crosseth this, is not authority, but a distemper thereof.

This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority; it is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. The woman's own choice makes such a man her husband; yet being so chosen, he is her lord, and she is to be subject to him, yet in a way of liberty, not of bondage; and a true wife accounts her subjection her honor and freedom, and would not think her condition safe and free, but in her subjection to her husband's authority. Such is the liberty of the church under the authority of Christ, her king and husband; his yoke is so easy and sweet to her as a bride's ornaments; and if through frowardness or wantonness, etc., she shake it off, at any time, she is at no rest in her spirit, until she take it up again; and whether the lord smiles upon her, and embraceth her in his arms, or whether he frowns, or rebukes, or smites her, she apprehends the sweetness of his love in all, and is refreshed, supported, and instructed by

every such dispensation of his authority over her. On the other side, ye know who they are that complain of this yoke and say, let us break their bands, etc., we will not have this man to rule over us.

Even so, brethren, it will be between you and your magistrates. If you stand for your natural corrupt liberties, and will do what is good in your own eyes, you will not endure the least weight of authority, but will murmur, and oppose, and be always striving to shake off that yoke; but if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then you will quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you, in all the administrations of it, for your good. Wherein, if we fail at any time, we hope we shall be willing (by God's assistance) to hearken to good advice from any of you, or in any other way of God; so shall your liberties be preserved, in upholding the honor and power of authority amongst you.¹

To rank this speech with the political writings of John Locke is, I believe, to leap far beyond what the facts warrant. Winthrop betrays very little genuine political thinking in it. His plea that the colonists never forget that their magistrates are human beings and subject to the same failings as are all other mortals, is, of course, sound counsel, but hardly profound philosophy. And his differentiation between "natural" and "civil or federal" liberty is pretty banal. His attempt to liken the devotion of the wife to her husband to that of the citizen to the rule of the magistrates is in keeping with the intellectual temper of the time, but nothing more. The speech as a whole is, to be sure, good-humored and written in a dignified and eloquent manner, but that is all.

Winthrop was an able administrator, and the unanimous judgment of the historians that the foundation of New England was largely his work is unquestionably correct. In this respect he was probably a man of far greater ability than Bradford. He possessed a calmer mind, and was more the man of the world. But he was not as good a writer. He never reached the heights of eloquence that Bradford reached, for example, in his pages describing the arrival of the Pilgrims on these shores. Professor Trent is far more sound in his judgment than Professor Tyler, when he says, "But when everything is said, it remains true that the worthy Governor was no artist — which is another way

¹ "Winthrop's Journal." Hosmer edition. Vol. II. pp. 237-239.

of saying that his style was dry. . . . He does not charm us as Bradford frequently does."¹

6. EDWARD JOHNSON

Edward Johnson was one of the most useful, though at the same time also one of the most fanatical, men of early New England. He is remembered today largely because of his bizarre chronicle entitled, "Wonder-working Providence of Sions Saviour in New England. 1628-1651."² It has had a curious history. Toward the end of the year 1653, but under the date of 1654, a London publisher, Nathaniel Brooke by name, brought out a book entitled, "A History of New-England, from the English planting in the yeere 1628 untill the Yeere 1652." The book was really a history of Massachusetts. The author's name appeared nowhere on the volume. The book sold very badly. At the time the publisher had in hand another book, "America Painted to the Life," and not knowing what to do with the unsold sheets of the "A History of New-England," sandwiched them into it. When the new volume finally appeared, it had four parts. The first and fourth were apparently written by Ferdinando Gorges, grandson of the celebrated Sir Ferdinando Gorges, the patentee; the second was by the knight himself; while the third was "A History of New-England." The ostensible author was Sir Ferdinando Gorges, Knight. The book was no sooner published than the Gorges family issued a public protest, but the real authorship of part three was not established until 1736 by Thomas Prince in his "Chronological History of New England."

Very little is known of the life of Edward Johnson. He probably came from St. George, Canterbury, and was christened some time in the middle of September, 1598. He was the son of William Johnson, the parish clerk of St. George's parish, and was married about 1618. He was a man of considerable property when he came to New England in 1630 with Winthrop, who was very fond of him and later licensed him to trade with the Indians along the Merrimac river.

¹ "A History of American Literature," by William P. Trent. N. Y. 1903. pp. 43-44.

² The edition of this book from which I shall quote is "Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628-1651," edited by J. Franklin Jameson, a descendant of the author and director of the department of historical research in the Carnegie Institute of Washington. A volume in the series, "Original Narratives of Early Historical Association." General editor, J. Franklin Jameson. Publication of present book, New York, 1910. The greater part of the biographical material I have gathered from the editor's introduction.

Johnson returned to England a year later, but came back to this country in 1638, in the very heat of the antinomian excitement. A man of very orthodox beliefs, he threw himself into the controversy with heart and soul. He was one of the leading men in the founding of the town of Woburn, and for thirty years, from its incorporation in 1642 to his death in 1672, he was in public office — selectman, the captain of the trainband, town clerk and town representative in the General Court. He also took an important part in the doings of the Colony at large. He was on many of its important committees, and in 1659 was made the surveyor-general of arms and munitions.

When he wrote his book it is not known, but it was the first published history of Massachusetts, antedating the publications of the Winthrop history by 131 years and that of the Bradford history by 207 years. It is, in large part, extremely difficult reading, especially in those numerous sections wherein he grows rabid over religious questions. But it also contains portions of moderate clarity.

The first chapter is entitled, "The sad condition of England, when this People removed." He describes the condition in these words, which are somewhat mild in acerbity compared to what follows later on:

When England began to decline in Religion, like lukewarm Laodicea, and instead of purging out popery, a farther complaine was sought not onely in vaine Idolatrous Ceremonies, but also in prophaning the Sabbath, and by Proclamation throughout their Parish churches, exasperating lewd and prophane persons to celebrate a Sabbath like the Heathen to Venus, Baccus and Ceres; in so much that the multitude of irreligious lascivious and popish affected persons spred the whole land like Grashoppers, in this very time Christ the glorious King of his Churches, raises an Army out of our English Nation, for freeing his people from their long servitude under usurping Prelacy; and because every corner of England was filled with the fury of malignant adversaries. Christ creates a New England to muster up the first of his forces in: Whose low condition, little number, and remoteness of place made these adversaries triumph, despising this day of small things, but in this hight of their pride the Lord Christ brought sudden, and unexpected destruction upon them. Thus have you a touch of time when this worke began.¹

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 23.

But he cannot keep up this comparatively clear language and mild temper for long. In the chapter entitled, "An Exhortation to all People, Nation's and Languages, to indeavor the advancing of the Kingdome of Christ in the purity of his Ordinances, seeing he hath done such admirable Acts for the poor shrubs," he lets off this blast:

And now all you whose affections are taken with wonderfull matters (Attend) and you that think Christ hath forgotten his poore despised people (Behold) and all you that hopefully long for Christs appearing to confound Antichrist (Consider) and rejoyce all yee his Churches the World throughout, for the Lambe is preparing his Bride, and oh! yee the antient Beloved of Christ, whom he of old led by the hand from Egypt to Canaan, through the great and terrible Wildernesse, looke here, behold him whom who have peirced, preparing to peirce your hearts with his *Wonder-working Providence*, and to provoke you by this little handfull of his people to looke on him and mourne. . . . The Winter is past, the Raine is changed and gone, come out of the holes of the secret places, feare not because your number is but small, gather into Churches, and let Christ be your King: Yee Presbytery, Lord it not over them or any Churches, but feed every one, that one flock over which Christ hath made you overseers, and yee people of Christ give your Presbytery double honours, that they with you may keepe the watch of the Lord over his Churches. Yee Dutch come out of hods-podge, the great mingle-mangle of Religion among you hath caused the Churches of Christ to increase so little with you, standing at a stay like Corne among Weeds, Oh, yee French! fear not the great Swarmes of Locusts, nor the croaking Frogs in your Land, Christ is reaching out the hand to you, look what hee hath done for these English, and sure hee is no Respector of Persons, etc.: . . . oh Italy! The Seat and Center of the Beast, Christ will now pick out a People from among you for himselfe, see here what wonders hee works in little time. Oh! yee Spaniards and Portugalls, Christ will shew you the abominations of that beastly Whore, who hath made your Nations drunke with the Wine of Fornication. Dread not that cruell murtherous Inquisition, for Christ is now making Inquisition for them, and behold, here now hee hath rewarded them, who dealt cruelly with these his people.¹

¹ "Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628-1651," edited by J. Franklin Jameson. pp. 58-60.

Unintelligible and rabid as this passage is, the one that follows is even more so. The chapter in which it appears is entitled, "Of the Lords great deliverance of his New England People, from the clouds of Errors that were bursting in among them." Johnson unbosoms himself thus:

As for the great Mountaine of proud erronious judgment on your right hand, the prayer of Faith shall remove then, and cast them into the depth of the Sea, and for the strengthening of your faith herein, because the Lord will have you depend on him in the use of meanes, not miracle, hee hath purposely pitcht out for this very worke, some of his most orthodox servants, and chiefe Champions of his truth, able though his mercy to weld that bright Weapon of his Word prepared by the spirit for this purpose, to bring to the block these Traytours to his truths one by one, and behead them before your eyes. And for this very end they are to gather together in a Synodical way,¹ with a decisive power to ondoe all the cunning twisted knots of Satans Malignity to the truths of Christ, opening the Scripture, that nothing but the pure Word of God may take place; and that you may assuredly believe the Lord hath purposely called his Servants and Souldiers to this place by his Providence to cutt off this cursed spirit of Errours and Heresies, which hath but at first dog'd all Reformed Churches of Christ, There are for your further aid herein many more of these sincere Souldiers floawting upon the great Ocean toward you, who will be with you before this Synod is set, that you may declare it in the ears of all posterity, to be the very Finger of God in catching the proud in their own craftinesse, who hath hatch't their devices, thus to cast all the Ministers of Christ, except some one or two, under this censure of being prejudiced against their persons, and for the little remnant to labor with flattery to blinde their eyes, that at least they might not be against them, Seeing they could not procure them to take their part, (to be sure when the gorssenesse of their Errors were made known, they would not), by this meanes having their hopes exalted (in their own apprehensions at least) to gaine the most of the people on their side.

The Lord casts them down from the proud Pinnacle of their

¹ A general council of the Congregational churches of New England, including the ministers and representatives of the laity, set at Cambridge from August 30 to September 22, 1637. It condemned eighty-two errors attributed to the Hutchinsonian party.

Machiavilian Plot, by bringing in more men of courage Uninterested, yea, unknown to most of their persons, but for their errors, as strong to confute them as any, and more fit to wipe off the filme from the eyes of some of their brethren, which these Errorists by their Syccophancy had clouded.¹

Like nearly all the other annalists of his time, Johnson interspersed his terrible prose with even more dreadful verse. The following elegy, typical of his poetical style, is on "John Winthrop Esq. Eleven times Governour of the English Nation, inhabiting the Mattacusets Bay in New England."

*Why leavest thou, John, thy station, in Suffolk, thy own soile,
Christ will have thee a pillar be, for's people thou must toyle;
He chang'd thy heart, then take his part, 'gainst prelates proud
invading*

*His Kingly throne set up alone, in wilderness their shading.
His little flocks from Prelates knicks, twice ten years rul'd thou
hast,*

*With civill sword at Christs word, and eleven times been trast
By Name and Note, with peoples vote, their Governour to be;
Thy means has spent, 'twas therefore lent to raise this work
by thee.*

*Well arm'd and strong with sword among Christ armies
marcheth he,*

*Doth valiant praise, and weak one raise, with kind benignity.
To lead the Van 'gainst Babylon, doth worthy Winthrop call;
Thy Progeny shall Battell try, when Prelacy shall fall.*

*With fluent Tongue thy Pen doth run, in learned Latine phrase,
To Sweades, French, Dutch, thy Neighbours, which thy lady
rhetorick praise.*

*Thy bounty feeds Christs servant needs, in wilderness of wants
To Indians thou Christs Gospell now 'mongst heathen people
plants.*

*Yet thou poore dust, now dead and must to rottennesse be
brought,*

*Till Christ restore thee glorious, more than can of dust be
thought.²*

¹ "Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628-1651," edited by J. Franklin Jameson. pp. 152-153.

² *Ibid.* p. 76.

But when Johnson forgot "the hods-podge, the great mingle-mangle of Religion," and addressed himself regarding practical matters in no way connected with theological disputes, he wrote clear and vigorous English. There is one chapter in his book which stands out in this respect. It deals with the planting of Woburn, in which he took a leading part. A well-known scholar has called it "one of the classical passages for the student of the origins of town and church government in New England."¹ An excerpt:

. . . this Town, as all others, had its [limits] fixed by the General Court, to the contenesse [contents] of four miles square, (beginning at the end of Charles Town boundes). The grant is to seven men of good and honest report, upon condition, that within two year they erect houses for habitation thereon, and so go on to make a Town thereof, upon the Act of Court; these seven men hav power to give and grant out lands unto any persons who are willing to take up their dwellings within the said precinct, and to be admitted to al common priviledges of the said Town, giving them such an ample portion, both of Medow and Upland, as their present and future stock of cattel and hands were like to improve, with eye had to others that might after come to populate the said Town; . . . These seven men ordered and disposed of the streets of the Town, as might be best for improvement of the Land, and yet civil and religious society maintained; to which end those that had land nearest the place for Sabbath Assembly, had a lesser quantity at home, and more farther off to improve for corn, of all kinds; they refused not men for their poverty, but according to their ability were helpful to the poorest sort, in building their houses, and distributed to them land accordingly; the poorest had six or seven acres of Medow, and twenty five of Upland, or thereabouts.

Thus was this Town populated, to the number of sixty families, or thereabout, and after this manner are the Towns of New England peopled. The scituation of this Town is in the highest part of the yet peopled land, neere upon the head-springs of many considerable rivers, of their branches, as the first rise of Ipswitch river, and the rise of Shashin river, one of the most considerable branches of Merrimeck, . . . ; their Medows are not large, but lye in divers places to particular dwellings, the like doth their

¹ *Ibid.* p. iii.

Springs; their Land is very fruitful in many places, although they have no great quantity of plain land in any one place, yet doth their Rocks and Swamps yeeld very good food for cattle; as also they have Mast and Tar for shipping, but the distance of place by land causeth them as yet to be unprofitable; they have great store of iron ore; their meeting house stands in small Plain, where four streets meet; the people are very laborious, if not exceeding some of them. . . .

The 22. of the 9. month following Mr. Thomas Carter was ordained Pastor, in presence of the like Assembly. After he had exercised in preaching and prayer the greater part of the day, two persons in the name of the Church laid their hands upon his head, and said, We ordain thee Thomas Carter to be Pastor unto the Church of Christ; then one of the Elders Priest, being desired of the Church, continued in prayer unto the Lord for his more especial assistance of this his servant in his work, being a charge of such weighty importance, as is the glory of God and salvation of souls, that the very thought would make a man to tremble in the sense of his own inability to the work. The people having provided a dwelling house, built at the charge of the Town in general, welcomed him unto them with joy, that the Lord was pleased to give them such a blessing, that their eyes may see their Teachers."¹

Johnson was an excellent frontiersman. As an administrator he was of the same mold as Bradford, hardy, practical and devoted with his whole heart to the founding of a nation upon this continent. But like Bradford, again, he was a Puritan of the most fanatical sort. He believed to the last of his days that he was participating in a Holy Cause, in a war against the Devil, and dissenters, however mild, were to him in alliance with the forces of darkness. Nothing was too savage for them. The greater part of his book is unintelligible, and the little that has sense is of negligible worth artistically. He probably tried to imitate the sonorous style of the Bible, and succeeded only in being incomprehensibly vehement. But his book has great value as depicting the temper of mind of the dominating Puritan oligarchy. He was perhaps more typical of his time than either Bradford or Winthrop. He was not so eloquent as the former nor so

¹ "Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, 1628-1651," edited by J. Franklin Jameson. pp. 212-217.

matter of fact as the latter. He was the common man raised to a position of leadership and become somewhat articulate. He was the embodiment of the Forgotten Man of his day in America.¹

7. JOHN MASON

Less able as an administrator but a far better writer than Johnson was Captain John Mason,² of Connecticut. He is chiefly remembered for his vigorous chronicle, "An Epitome or Brief History of the Pequot War." He was among the first who went from Massachusetts about the year 1635 to lay the foundation of the Connecticut Colony. At the time there were three powerful Indian nations in the southwestern section of New England: the Narragansetts, the Pequots, and the Mohicans (or Mohegans). Of these the Pequots were the most terrible. They had already won the alliance of the Mohicans in their contemplated grand attack against the English, and were soliciting the assistance of the Narragansetts. The Massachusetts Bay Colony had got wind of the latter move, and sent a delegation to the Narragansetts beseeching their friendship. The mission succeeded in its efforts, but this did not stop the Pequots from preparing for war.

The English would have been in bad straits had it not been for the kind offices of Uncas, the great Sachem of the Mohicans, who, on the first coming of the Puritans, fell into an intimate acquaintance with Captain Mason. Though he had royal Pequot blood on both his mother's and father's side, and had married the daughter of the late sachem of that tribe, he yet greatly assisted the English in their attack on the Pequots, and was largely instrumental in the taking of this main fortress and in the massacring of 700 of them. Mason took a leading part in the onslaught, and thus was able to write his history from first-hand knowledge. He was a man of long military experience. Before coming to this country he had served in the Netherland War, under Sir Thomas Fairfax, with distinction. After the Pequot War

¹ For a similar estimate see the section on Johnson in the chapter, "The Historians, 1607-1783," by John Spencer Bassett, in "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. p. 25. Also Tyler. Vol. I. p. 120.

² For the biographical information here I am indebted to the introduction in "A Brief History of the Pequot War, Written by Major John Mason, A Principal Actor Therein. With an Introduction and some explanatory Notes," by the Rev. Mr. Thomas Prince. New York. 1736. Reprinted by J. Sabin & Sons, 1869. Sabin's Reprints. Octavo series. No. VIII.

he was made major-general of all Connecticut, and held that office till 1670. He died in 1672 or 1673.

The "History of the Pequot War" was first printed by Increase Mather in 1677 in his "Relation of the Troubles with the Indians," and was wrongly attributed by him to John Allyn. The Rev. Thomas Prince was the first to identify the real author in his reprint of the history in 1736.¹ The history is very brief, about ten thousand words in length. But it is a very important document to the historian. Moreover, it stands out in the literature of the time as a piece of plain and vigorous writing. Here are some excerpts from it:

On the Thursday about *eight of the Clock* in the *Morning*, we Marched thence toward PEQUOT, with about *five hundred Indians*: But through the Heat of the Weather and want of Provisions, some of our Men Fainted. And having Marched about *twelve Miles*, we came to *Pawcatuck-River*, at a *Ford* where our *Indians* told us the Pequots did usually Fish; there making an *Alta*, we stayed some small time: *The Narragansett Indians* manifesting great Fear, in so much that many of them returned, although they had frequently despised us, saying, *That we durst not look upon a PEQUOT, but themselves would perform great Things*; though we had often told them *that we came on purpose and were resolved, GOD assisting, to see the PEQUOTS, and to Fight with them before we returned, though we perished*. I then enquired of ONKOS, *what he thought the Indians would do?* Who said, *The NARRAGANSETTS would all leave us*, but as for HIMSELF *He would never leave us*: and so it proved: For which Expressions and some other Speeches of his, I shall never forget him. Indeed he was a great Friend, and did great Service. . . .

Then Captain *Underhill* came up, who marched in the Rear; and commending ourselves to GOD divided our Men: There being two Entrances into the *Fort*, intending to enter both at once: Captain *Mason* leading up to that on the *North East Side*; who approaching with one Rod, heard a Dog bark and an Indian crying *Owanux! Owanux!* which is *Englishmen! Englishmen!* We called up our Forces with all expedition, gave fire upon them thorough the Pallizado; the *Indians* being in a dead indeed their

¹ "A Brief History of the Pequot War, Written by Major John Mason, A Principal Actor Therein. With an Introduction and some explanatory Notes," by the Rev. Mr. Thomas Prince. New York. 1736. p. v.

last Sleep: Then we wheeling off fell upon them *the main Entrance*, which was blocked up with Bushes about Breast high, over which the *Captain* passed, intending to make good the Entrance, encouraging the rest to follow. . . .

Whereupon Captain *Mason* seeing no *Indians*, entred a *Wigwam*; where he was beset with many *Indians*, waiting all opportunities to lay Hands on him, but could not prevail. . . . The *Captain* going out of the *Wigwam* saw many *Indians* in the Lane or Street; he making toward them, they fled, were pursued to the end of the Lane, where . . . seven of them were Slain, as they said. The *Captain* facing about, marched a slow Pace up the Lane he came down, perceiving himself very much out of Breath; and coming to the other End near the Place where he first entred, saw *two Soldiers* standing close to the Pallizado with their Swords pointed to the Ground: The *Captain* told them that *We should never kill them after that manner*: The *Captain* also said, WE MUST BURN THEM; and immediately stepping into the *Wigwam*, where he had been before, brought out a Fire-Brand, and putting it into the Matts with which they were covered, set the *Wigwams* on Fire. Lieutenant *Thomas Bell* and *Nicholas Omsted* beholding, came up; and when it was thoroughly kindeled, the *Indians* ran as Men most dreadfully Amazed.

And indeed such a dreadful Terror did the ALMIGHTY let fall upon their Spirits, that they would fly from us and run into the very Flames, where many of them perished.¹

8. DANIEL GOOKIN

Daniel Gookin was born somewhere in England about the year 1612.² His first landing in this country was probably in Virginia in 1642. In the year following, when the non-conformists were banished from the Colony, he went to New England. For a time he lived in

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 6-7.

² The biographical material which follows is from the introduction to "An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of The Christian Indians in New England, in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677. Impartially Drawn by one well acquainted with that affair and presented unto the Right Honourable the Corporation Residing in London, appointed by the King's Most Excellent Majesty for Promoting the Gospel Among the Indians," by Daniel Gookin. From *Archæologia Americana. Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society. Vol. II. No. 2.* Cambridge. Printed by the Society of the University Press, 1836. The notes, and probably the introduction also, are by Samuel G. Drake.

Boston, and then in Cambridge, where he was placed in command of the military of the town. Later he was elected to the office of major-general, or commander-in-chief of the Colony. He represented Cambridge in the General Court, and in 1651 was chosen speaker of the House of Deputies. "But the office to which he devoted the energies of the residue of a long life, was that of Superintendent of the Indians within the jurisdiction of Massachusetts."¹

In conjunction with the Rev. John Eliot he watched over the Indians, and tried to bring the rudiments of Western civilization to them. The people of the Colony were not always with him in these labors, especially in the times of the Indian attacks, but toward the end of his life they were won over. He died in Cambridge on March 19, 1687. Beside "An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England," the work for which he is best known, he also wrote a history of New England. He never had it published in his lifetime, and the manuscript is probably lost now. "The original manuscript, and only copy of it, is supposed to have been destroyed in the dwelling-house of his son, at Sherburne, Mass., which, with its contents, was consumed by fire."² He also wrote a third work, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," which was first published by the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1792. It describes the Indian customs, beliefs and languages, and is of great value to the anthropologist and ethnologist.

"An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of The Christian Indians in New England" is full of clear and persuasive writing. At times, indeed, it reaches heights of nobility seldom attained by any one else among the early Puritan *prominenti*. A sample:

I know, also, there are some among the English, that have a very ill conceit of all the Indians, and will not admit them so much charity, as to think that any of them are sober or honest; such I shall leave to the Lord, desiring he will give them more charity, and root out of their hearts the spirit of enmity and animosity. And it is probable some persons will not be wanting to calumniate our Christian Indians, and object that, notwithstanding all that hath been said on their behalf, yet they are hypocrites and wicked

¹ "An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of The Christian Indians in New England, in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677 . . ." by Daniel Gookin. From *Archæologia Americana*. Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society. Vol. II. No. 2. Cambridge. Printed by the Society of the University Press. 1836. p. 426.

² *Ibid.* p. 427.

men, and will frequently drink and commit other lewdness. To this I shall answer in a few words.

I have good ground to believe, that several of them are sincere; but I do not say they are all such. And I dare not affirm for my own countrymen, that there are no hypocrites or evil-doers among them. I wish and pray, that both English and Indians were all better than I fear they are; 't is not my work to judge men's hearts; that belongs to God. Secondly, I cannot deny but that many of them, especially the younger sort, that have been and are soldiers, but they are too apt to be overtaken with drink. I could wish they had not so much example and temptation thereunto by some English, especially such as have their fellow-soldiers in the wars, who are very ready, when they meet the Indians, to give or procure strong drink for them; and others, for filthy lucre's sake, sell them strong drink, expressly prohibited by law; indeed, a very little matter will intoxicate their brains; for, being used to drink water, they cannot bear a fourth part of what an Englishman will bear. I have known one drunk with as little as one eighth part of a pint of strong water, and others with little more than a pint of cider. I do not plead to justify them in such actions, but endeavour to declare things as they are in truth. Thirdly, I cannot but know sundry of the Christian Indians are not of so good conversation, as Christian religion requires; which thing is matter of lamentation to all that fear God; not only in respect of those Indians, but of the English also, among whom they live; yet, notwithstanding, we may not presently exclude them out of visible Christianity, but rather endeavour to convince and reform them, if God please to be instrumental to correct them, and turn them to God effectually. Whilst men do externally attend the means of grace, keep the Sabbath, pray in their families morning and evening, and endeavour and desire to be instructed in Christian religion, both themselves and children, as the praying Indians do, there is charitable encouragement and good hope, through grace, that, as God hath wrought effectually upon some, so he will upon others, in his own time and according to his good pleasure, that he hath purposed in himself. I account it my duty not to censure and judge, but to pray for them and others.¹

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 514-515.

9. WILLIAM WOOD

William Wood's chief claim for our attention is his "New Englands Prospect,"¹ of which one eminent authority has said that it "may be esteemed the earliest topographical account, worthy to be so entitled, of the Massachusetts Colony."² Not much is known about Wood himself. He probably came over in 1629, and sailed back to England four years later, and very likely never returned. "New Englands Prospect" was first published in London in 1634, and went through a second edition in 1635, and a third four years later. Like so many other colonial annals, especially those of New England, it is interspersed with poetry of a most dreadful sort. But the prose, it must be admitted, is "vigorous and idiomatic English."³

A good idea of the subject matter of the book can be got from a perusal of the table of contents, or as Wood called it, "The Table." Here are some of the chapter titles: "Of the Situations, Bayes, Havens, and Inlets," "Of the Seasons of the yeare, Winter and Summer, together with the heat, cold, snow, raine, and the effects of it," "Of the climate, length, and shortness of the day and night, with the suiteableness of it to English bodies for health and sickness," "Of the nature of the Soyle," "Of the Beasts that live on the land," "Beasts living in the water," "What provision is to be made for a Iourney at Sea, and what to carry with us for our use at Land," "Of the Aberginians or Indians North-wards," "Of their Apparrell, Ornaments, Paintings, &c," "Of their hardiness," "Of their marriage," "Of their deaths, &c," and "Of their women, &c."

The following, a fair specimen of Wood's descriptive writing, comes from chapter two, entitled "Of the Seasons of the yeare, Winter and Summer, together with the heat, cold, snow, raine, and the effects of it":

¹ The edition used in this section is "New England's Prospect. A true, lively, and experimental description of that part of *America* commonly called *New England*: discovering the state of that Countrie, both as it stands to our newcome *English Planters*; and to the old Native Inhabitants. Laying down that which may both enrich the knowledge of the mind-travelling Reader, or benefit the future Voyager," by William Wood. Printed in London, 1634. The Publications of the Prince Society, Boston: Printed for the Society, by John Wilson and Son, 1865. This is an exact reprint of the first edition. The preface to it is signed by "C. D.," who is probably the well-known student of early New England, Dr. Charles Deane, of Cambridge, Mass.

² *Ibid.* C. D., p. vi.

³ *Ibid.* p. vi.

For that part of the Countrey wherein most of the English have their habitations: it is for certaine the best ground and sweetest Climate in all those parts, bearing the name of *New England*, agreeing well with the temper of our English bodies, being high land, and sharpe Ayre, and though most of our *English Townes* border upon the Sea-coast, yet are they not often troubled with Mists, or unwholesome fogges, or cold weather from the Sea, which lies East and South from the Land. And whereas in *England* most of the cold windes and weathers come from the Sea, and those situations are counted most unwholesome, that are neare the Sea-coast, in that Countrey it is not so, but otherwise; for in the extremity of Winter, the North-east and South winde comming from the Sea, produceth warme weather, and bringing in the warme-working waters of the Sea, loosneth the frozen Bayes, carrying away their Ice with their Tides melting the Snow, and thawing the grounds; onely the North-west winde comming over the Land, is the cause of extreame cold weather, being alwaies accompanied with deepe Snowes and bitter Frost, so that in two or three dayes the Rivers are passable for horse and man. But as it is an Axiome in Nature, *Nullum violentum est perpetuum*, No extreames last long, for this cold winde blowes seldome above three dayes together, after which the weather is more tolerable, the Aire being nothing so sharpe, but peradventure in four or five dayes after this cold messenger will blow a fresh, commanding every man to his house, forbidding any to out-face him without prejudice to their noses; but it may be objected that it is too cold a Countrey for our *Englishmen*, who have been accustomed to a warmer Climate, to which it may be answered, (*Ignē levatur hyems*) there is Wood good store, and better cheape to build warme houses, and make fires, which makes the Winter lesse tedious.¹

10. JOHN JOSSELYN

John Josselyn made the first of his two voyages to this country in 1638 and the second in 1663.² On the latter occasion he appears to

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 3-4.

² For the biographical material here I am indebted to the introduction appearing in "An Account of the two Voyages to New England. Wherein you have the setting out of a Ship, With

have spent eight years in New England. Beside "An Account of two Voyages" he also wrote a book entitled "New England Rarities discovered in Birds, Beasts, Fishes, Serpents and Plants of that Country," which was published in London in 1672. But it is full of exaggerations and is disrepute among botanists. "An Account of two Voyages" is probably more reliable. "Josselyn's observations of the natural history of the country, his descriptions of the various plants and notices of their medicinal effects, are more full and exact in the present work ["The Two Voyages"] than in 'New England's Rarities,' printed two years earlier, and must be considered as among the most valuable of those given by the early botanists of New England."¹

"An Account of two Voyages" is written in the form of a diary. The account of the first voyage is very short, but full of useful miscellaneous information for the prospective colonist. The nature of the advice in it may be gathered from the following extract:

*The common proportion of Victuals for the Sea to a Mess, being
4 men, is as followeth;*

Two pieces of Beef, of 3 pound and $\frac{1}{4}$ per piece.

Four pound of *Bread*.

One pint of $\frac{1}{2}$ of *Pease*.

Four Gallons of *Bear*, with *Mustard* and *Vinegar* for the flesh days in the week.

For four fish dayes, to each *mess* per day.

Two pieces of *Codd* or *Habberdine*, making three pieces of a fish.

One quarter of a pound of *Butter*.

Four pound of *Bread*.

Three quarters of a pound of *Cheese*.

Bear as before.

Oatemeal per day, for 50 men, Gallon 1. and so proportionable for more or fewer . . .

To prevent or take away Sea sickness, Conserve of *Worm-wood* is very proper, but these following Troches I prefer before it.

the charges; The prices of all necessities for furnishing a Planter & his Family at his first coming; A Description of the Country, Natives and Creatures; The Government of the Country as it is now possessed by the *English*, &c. A large Chronological Table of the most remarkable passages from the first discovering of the Continent of *America*, to the year 1673. By John Josselyn Gent." *London*. Printed for G. Widdowes at the *Green Dragon* in St. Pauls Church-yard, 1675. Facsimile edition. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Vol. III. Third series. Cambridge. 1851.

¹ "An Account of Two Voyages to New-England, Made during the years 1638, 1663." Boston. William Veazie. 1845. p. vi.

First make paster of *Sugar* and *Gum-Dracagant* mixed together, then mixed therewith a reasonable quantitie of the powder of *Cinnamon* and *Ginger*, and if you please a little *Musk* also, and make it up into Roules of several fashions, which you may gild, of this when you are troubled in your Stomach, take and eat a quantity according to discretion.”¹

The account of the second voyage is much longer and more interesting. It deals with the topography and climate of New England, with its fauna and flora, and with the Indians. Josselyn was among the first colonials to make any mention of tobacco. Apparently he knew a great deal about it, and what he says makes amusing reading:

There is three sorts of Marchantable [tobacco], the first horse Tobacco, having a broad long leaf picked at the end; the second round pointed Tobacco; third sweet scented Tobacco. These are made up into Cane, Leaf or ball; there is little of it planted in *New-England*, neither have they learned the right way of curing of it. It is sown in April upon a bed of rich mould sifted, they make a bed about three yards long, or more according to the ground they intend to plant, and a yard and a half over; this they tread down hard, then they sow their seed upon it as thick as may be, and sift fine earth upon it, then tread it down again as hard as possible they can, when it hath gotten four or six leaves, they remove it into the planting ground; when it begins to bud toward flowering, they crop off the top, for the flower drawes away the strength of the leaf. For the rest I refer you to the Planter, being not willing to discover their mysteries.

The *Indians* in *New-England* use a small round leafed Tobacco, called by them, or the Fisherman Poke. *It is odious to the English. The vertues of Tobacco are these, it help dogestion, the Gout, the Tooth-Ach, prevents infection by scents, it heals the cold, and cools them that sweat, feedeth the hungry, spent spirits restoreth, purgeth the stomach, killeth nits and lice; the juice of the green leaf healeth green wounds, although poysoned; the syrup for many diseases, the smoak for the Phthisick, cough of the lungs, distillations of Rheume, and all diseases of a cold and moist cause, good for all bodies cold and moist taken upon an emptie stomach, taken upon a full stomach it precipitates diges-*

¹ Edition of the Mass. Historical Society. pp. 220-221.

*tion, immoderately taken it dryeth the body, enflameth the bloud, hurteth the brain, weakens the eyes and the sinews.*¹

His descriptions of the Indians are vivid, and are among the best in early New England literature. He knew them well — their miseries as well as their joys:

Their manner is when they have plague or small pox [a common disease with the Indians], among them to cover their *Wigwams* with Bark so close that no Air can enter in, lining them (as I said before) within, and making a great fire they remain there in a stewing heat till they are in a top sweat, and then run out into the Sea or River, and presently after they come into their Huts again they either recover or give up the Ghost; they dye patiently both men and women, not knowing of a Hell to scare them, nor a Conscience to terrifie them. In times of general mortality they omit the Ceremonies of burying, exposing their dead Carkases to the Beasts of prey. But at other times they dig a Pit and set the diseased therein upon his breech upright, and throwing in the earth, cover it with the sods and bind them down with sticks, driving in two stakes at each end; their mournings are somewhat like the howlings of the *Irish*, seldom at the grave but in the *Wigwam* where the party dyed, blaming the Devil for his hard heartedness, and concluding with rude prayers to him to afflict them no more.²

Josselyn also considers the English colonists — their government, their inhabitants, their religious beliefs, their common maladies and the prevailing remedies for them. Of the last subject he presents this interesting piece of dental history:

Men and Women keep their complexions, but lose their Teeth; the Women are pittifully Tooth-shaken; whether through the coldness of the climate, or by sweet-meats of which they have store, I am not able to affirm, for the Toothach I have found the following medicine very available, Brimstone and Gunpowder compounded with butter, rub the mandible with it, the outside being first warm'd.³

¹ Edition of the Mass. Historical Society. pp. 261-262.

² *Ibid.* pp. 299-300.

³ *Ibid.* p. 334.

Beside the two books above mentioned Josselyn also wrote "Chronological Observations of America, From the year of the World to the year of Christ, 1673."¹ It was published in London in 1674, and is mainly a table of events in America, with historical information thrown in. As is true of his other books, the writing in it is relatively clear and betrays a rather wide acquaintance with Greek and Roman history, and with the doings of the world at large.

II. FRANCIS HIGGINSON

The Rev. Francis Higginson (sometimes spelled Higgeson) probably came to this country some time in 1629. On the way over he wrote "A True Relation of the last Voyage to New England." It is pretty dull reading and deserving of no mention. While here he wrote an extremely short treatise, less than 10,000 words in length, entitled "New Englands Plantation, or, A Short and True Description Written by a reuerend Diuine now there resident."² It was published in London in 1630. It went through three editions in the same year. There is passable writing in it, but Tyler was mistaken when he thought he saw in Higginson "a delicate felicity of expression, and a quiet imaginative picturesqueness."³ What Tyler thought was picturesqueness was merely exaggeration. At his best Higginson was capable only of this:

In our Plantation we haue already a quart of Milke for a penny: but the abundant encrease of Corne proues this Countrey to be a wonderment. Thirtie, fortie, fiftie, sixtie, are ordinaire here: yea *Iosephs* encrease in *Ægypt* is out-stript here with vs. Our Planters hope to haue more than a hundred fould this yere: and all this while I am within compasse; what will you say of two hundred fould and vpwards? It is almost incredible what great some of our English Planters haue had by our Indian Corne. . . . For Wood there is no better in the World I think, here being foure sorts of Oke differing both in Leafe, Timber, and Colour, all excellent good. . . . The Temper of the Aire of *New-England* is one speciall thing that commends the place. Experi-

¹ This book is reproduced in the same volume directly following *Ibid.*

² The edition I quote from appears as No. 12 in Vol. I in Force's Tracts.

³ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 167.

ence doth manifest that there is hardly a more healthfull place to be found in the World that agreeth better with our English Bodyes. Many that haue beene weake and sickly in old *England*, by comming hither haue become thoroughly healed and growne healthful and strong. For heere is an extraordinairie cleere and dry Aire that is of most healing nature to all such as are of a Cold, Melancholy, Flegmatick, Reumaticke temper of Body.¹

¹ Force's edition of "New Englands Plantation." pp. 7-9.

CHAPTER VIII

New England

*The Religious Writers of
New England in the Seventeenth Century*

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The Religious Writers of New England in the Seventeenth Century

THE ANNALISTS JUST CONSIDERED UNDOUBTEDLY HAD AN INFLUENCE of some sort on their colonial brethren, and an even greater one on those in the home country contemplating coming over here. They served as the publicity agents of the new venture. But their importance sinks almost to insignificance when compared to the influence exerted by the contemporary religious writers. The New England of the time was essentially a theocracy, as priest-ridden perhaps as any community in all history. The preachers ruled the state with as complete an authority as any Pope ever did. As Mr. Richardson has said, "Few Roman Catholic priests exercise a more potent control over their congregations than these ministers and servants of the First Churches of Boston, Salem, Plymouth, over their independent and democratic flocks."¹ But if they did exercise such a control, they did so, in large part, with the free consent of the people. Professor Vernon Louis Parrington is undoubtedly right when he speaks of "the amazing fact that those old preachers were not mere accidents or by-products, but the very heat and passion of the time. If they were listened to gladly, it was because they uttered what many were thinking."²

The New England, especially the Massachusetts, of those days was indeed a church-state.³ The theologians moulded its whole life — religious, moral, political, cultural. And they remained in power unchallenged for nearly a hundred years, to the third quarter of the Seventeenth Century, to be precise, when the ascendant merchant class, long eager for political recognition commensurate with its commercial position, finally displaced them.⁴ It is thus impossible to un-

¹ "A History of American Literature," by Charles F. Richardson. Vol. I. p. 150.

² "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. Chapter entitled, "The Puritan Divines, 1620-1720," by Vernon Louis Parrington. p. 52.

³ See "The Founding of New England," by James Truslow Adams. p. 143 ff.

⁴ See the excellent discussion on this point in *Ibid.* pp. 171-174.

derstand the life of the time without considering the writings of the theologians, for what they wrote the people thought. With one or two exceptions, few of these writings deserve the title of literature. It would be preposterous to speak of them in the same breath with the writings of such masters of style as Berkeley, Manning or Newman. Only one or two of them are at all readable today. But they all have great historical and political interest.

"Their value comes from their intimate connection with the life of the people — from the fact that on the one hand they were the chief influence in moulding literary taste, and that, on the other hand, they show the literary demands made by the public."¹ From a strictly political point of view that have value because the doctrinal evolution they underwent was paralleled by an evolution in the contemporary political economy. In fact, it was the cause of this secular evolution. With the passing of the divines as a power in the state came the passing of the political tyranny then regnant: for the first were at the head of the second. "The struggle for ecclesiastical democracy was a forerunner of the struggle for political democracy, which was to be the business of the next century."²

I. THOMAS HOOKER

The first preacher of note to arise in New England was Thomas Hooker.³ He was born in Marfield, Leicestershire, on July 7, 1586, and passed his childhood and youth in the England of Queen Elizabeth and King James. He was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, a Puritan institution, where the Revs. John Cotton and John Eliot also studied. In 1626 he became religious lecturer and assistant minister in Chelmsford, and there established a reputation as a fiery non-conformist. Archbishop Laud got wind of it, and drove him out of the country. Hooker went to Holland, the haven in those days of all the religiously oppressed. In 1633 he came to America. He first became pastor of the church at Newtown, now Cambridge, Mass. The church was made up of his religious and political followers, and

¹ "A History of American Literature," by William B. Cairns. pp. 36-37.

² Parrington, "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. p. 54.

³ For the biographical material on Hooker I am indebted to "The Life of Thomas Hooker," by Edward W. Hooker, a descendant. Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and published by it, Boston, 1849.

he was held in high esteem, not only by them, but also by the rest of the Colony. Three years later he and his flock migrated to Connecticut, and there set up a new Colony and a new form of religious government.

The reasons for this migration are still clouded in mystery. The desire for religious and political democracy hardly explains it, for at the time the desire was absent in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, as later historical researches prove. All we know is that the governing powers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were apparently willing to give a large tract of land adjacent to Cambridge to Hooker and his followers for them to live on as they wished. Says Professor Channing: "Precisely why Haynes and Hooker and their companions deserted Massachusetts for the Connecticut Valley is one of the unsolved problems of New England history. . . . There were probably many reasons. Hooker, for instance, disliked the close connection between church and state which obtained in Massachusetts and preferred a broader franchise than one which rested on church membership. . . . The Connecticut leaders probably felt themselves overshadowed by Winthrop, Dudley, and Endicott, by John Cotton and John Wilson."¹

Hooker preached the opening sermon to the General Court of Connecticut in Hartford, May 31, 1638. Very likely he had an important hand in writing the constitution of the Colony, which has been called, "the first written constitution of modern democracy."² But his importance in this regard has been somewhat overestimated. One enthusiast has gone so far as to say, "Thomas Hooker was not only the first American democrat, but he was the father of the Constitution of the United States."³ The same writer goes on to speak of Hooker as "a statesman who ranks with Jefferson . . . and a Founder who is entitled to share with George Washington the glory of the founding of the United States."⁴ It is true that Hooker was a democrat, and one of the few people of that persuasion in the America of his day. It is true that in his famous opening sermon to the General Court of Connecticut he laid down the doctrines that "the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by Gods own allow-

¹ Channing. Vol. I. pp. 398-399.

² Parrington. Vol. I. p. 53.

³ "Thomas Hooker. The First American Democrat," an address by Walter Scott Logan before the New York Society of the Founders and Patriots of America, February 19, 1904. p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 28.

ance," and that "they who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power, also, to set bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them," because "the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people."¹ But, as James Truslow Adams says, "Neither to Hooker, nor to his fellow colonists of Connecticut, was this last principle new, either in theory or in practice. He was arguing, not for a democratic government, which they already possessed, but for a fixed code of laws to rule the magistrates in their actions."²

Hooker was both one of the most learned and one of the most Puritanical divines of his day. Cotton Mather reports him as having said once, "I can compare with any man living, for fears."³ As a preacher he was mighty in a day when all preachers taught the Gospel with bellows. He was "a son of consolation to the afflicted children of God," and also "a Son of Thunder, when he had occasion to rebuke sin."⁴ It was said of him that "while doing his Master's work, he would put a king in his pocket."⁵ That he was truly a man of God is shown by the testimony of Cotton Mather about his death, which occurred in 1647. At his last sermon, says Mather, "some of his most close observers" noticed "an astonishing sort of a cloud" in the church, and among themselves "a most unaccountable heaviness and sleepiness . . . not unlike the drowsiness of the disciples when the Lord was going to die." The whole mystery was solved in a few days. After a short illness, "at last he closed his own eyes with his own hands, and gently stroking his own forehead, with a smile in his countenance, he gave a little groan, and so expired his soul into the arms of his fellow-servants, the holy angels."⁶

Hooker's death shook New England. As Professor Tyler says, ". . . a wail of grief went up at the tidings . . . : this was the first one of their mighty leaders that had fallen in the wilderness."⁷ All the preachers and the more religious of the laity at once set to work expressing their profound sorrow in verse. The elegy by John Cotton, his successor as the leader of the Puritan forces in this country, deserves special mention, as showing the high regard in which Hooker

¹ The full text of the sermon does not survive. The above quotations are the notes of some hearer, and are incorporated in "Thomas Hooker," by G. L. Walker. New York. 1891. p. 125.

² "The Founding of New England." p. 192.

³ "Magnalia." Vol. I. p. 304.

⁴ "Life of Thomas Hooker," by E. W. Hooker. p. 23.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 23.

⁶ "Magnalia." Vol. I. p. 350.

⁷ Tyler. Vol. I. pp. 197-198.

was held among his people and giving a glimpse of the type of writing in favor at the time. It follows in full:

*On my Reverend and dear Brother, Mr THOMAS HOOKER,
late Pastor of the Church at Hartford on Connecticut.*

*To see three things was holy Austins wish,
Rome in her Flower, Christ Jesus in the Flesh,
And Paul i'th Pulpit; Lately men might see,
Two first, and more, in Hookers Ministry.*

*Zion in Beauty, is a fairer sight,
Then Rome in Flower with all her glory dight:
Yet Zions beauty did most clearly shine,
In Hooker's Rule, and Doctrine; both Divine.*

*Christ in the Spirit, is more than Christ in Flesh,
Our souls to quicken, and our States to blesse:
Yet Christ in Spirit brake forth mightily,
In Faithful Hookers searching Ministry.*

*Paul in the Pulpit, Hooker could not reach,
Yet did he Christ in Spirit so lively Preach:
That living Hearers thought He did inherit
A double Portion of Pauls lively spirit.*

*Prudent in Rule, in Argument quick, full:
Fervent in Prayer, in Preaching powerful:
That well did learned Ames record bear,
The like to him He never wont to hear.*

*'Twas of Genevahs Worthies said, with wonder,
(Those Worthies Three:) Farell was wont to Thunder;
Viret, like Raine, on tender grasse to shower,
But Calvin, lively oracles to pour.*

*All these in Hookers spirit did remain:
A Sonne of Thunder, and a shower of Rain,
A pourer forth of lively Oracles,
In saving souls, the summe of miracles.*

*Now blessed Hooker, thou art set on high,
Above the thanklesse world, and cloudy sky:
Doe thou of all thy labour reape the Crown,
Whilst we here reape the seed, which thou hast sowed.*¹

Hooker has twenty-three published titles to his credit.² Very likely he wrote more. It is known that several of his sermons were destroyed many years after his death. "At the taking down of the old parsonage house of the First Congregational Church in Hartford, about thirty years since, a large quantity of ancient papers were found, supposed to be those of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, and by persons employed in the work, and who were either ignorant or thoughtless of their value, they were thrown into the Connecticut river."³ All of those extant deal with theological matters, and are written in the brittle, involved style of the day. The reasoning in them, when at all intelligible, is of so subtle a nature that one finds it difficult to believe that Hooker's hearers understood all he said.

Surely no average church audience of today would long tolerate a minister such as he was. Religion, to him, was not a pleasant, refined profession; rather, it was a life-long battle with the devil in man, and man to him was the most loathsome thing in creation. "Thou art dead in trespasses and sins," he thundered at his audiences. "What is that? A man is wholly possessed with a body of corruption, and the spawn of all abomination hath overspread the whole man. . . . All noisome lusts about in the soul, and take possession of it, and rule in it, and are fed there. . . . No carrion in a ditch smells more loathsomely in the nostrils of man, than natural man's works do in the nostrils of the Almighty."⁴ Unsatisfied by this diatribe, Hooker roared on thus: "Alas, the devil hath power over you. As it is with a dead sheep, all the carrion crows in the country come to prey upon it, and all base vermin breed and creep there; so it is with every poor, natural, carnal creature under heaven — a company of devils, like so many carrion crows, prey upon the heart . . . and all base lusts crawl and feed, and are maintained in such a wretched heart."⁵

Of his own writing Hooker said, "As it is beyond my skill, so I profess it is beyond my care to please the nicenesse of mens palates,

¹ Quoted in Morton's "New England Memorial." pp. 238-239.

² They are listed in "The Life of Thomas Hooker," by E. W. Hooker. pp. 172-175.

³ *Ibid.* pp. v-vi.

⁴ Hooker's "The Soul's Humiliation." pp. 33-34.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 37.

with any quaintnesse of language.”¹ This self appraisal was sound as far as the larger portion of his work went. The more bitter he was in his attack on the Devil the more confused and the less intelligible he became. For example:

How can such (those wretched persons, who undervalue the Lord Jesus in their hearts and apprehensions and look at him, as one unworthy their affection and love) ever expect to see the face of God in Christ in another world, whose hearts are so contrary to him in this? and yet every place is pestered with these Rebels. Some of the posterity of those, of whom the prophet speaks. Zach. 11.8. *Their Souls loathed me, and my Soul loathed them, saith the Lord of Host. God will pay thee in thine own coin, and recompense thine own waies upon thy head and heart.* Nay how canst thou not, but expect the Lord should justly loath thee, who are a very Dunghil of distempers, and whose works are worthy to be hated especially in that thou hatest him.

The name of *Judas* is accursed and execrable upon Earth. He is gibbited up with the remembrance, *Judas Iscariot*, who also betrayed him.

The carriage of the Jews is detestable to the eares of all that have heard of the Name of Christianity, who preferred *Barab-bas*, before the Lord Jesus. *Away with him, not him but Barab-bas.* And yet there be multitudes in the world, who deal worse with the Lord Jesus in their daily course. Who sel Christ, not for Silver, but for their sins, and the lusts of their own hearts, and that they may give satisfaction thereunto. And proclaime it in their practices, *Away with the commands of Christ, not they, but mine own carnal desires shall carry me. Away with the promises and comforts of Christ, not they, but the waywardness of mine own wil and distempered perversness of mine own heart, that only pleaseth me,* Oh, but it wil be replied, True it is, our infirmities may be many, and temptations strong, our failings great, by reason of the Body of death: but should we be haters and despisers of the Lord Jesus, its pity we should live. Should we hate him, that came to save us? we Hope we be far from that hellish frame.²

¹ “The Way of the Churches of New England.” The Preface of Thomas Hooker’s “Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline.” Old South Leaflets. Boston. Vol. III. No. 55. p. 10.

² “A Comment upon Christ’s Prayer. In the Seventeenth of John. Wherein is opened The Union Beleevers have with God and Christ, and the glorious Priviledge thereof . . .,” by

Again, and even more ferociously — the subject is terror as a consequence of sin:

It discovers the dreadful Estate, and miserable Condition of all wicked men, the Children and Darlings of the World, who take content in it, may lay you in her Bosom, for the World wil love her own: but ye be far enough from the love of the Father, as ye be far from the knowledge of him. Hence a Sea of Misery breaks in upon thee, able to over-whelm thy Soul irrecoverable. If it can be once said, *Thou knowest not the Father*, ther is enough said to sink they heart in everlasting discouragement. In this Estate thou canst expect no good, for thou canst receive no good from the hand of the lord, though he be the Father of Mercies, and God of all Consolation: There is none for thee, not one Blessing nor Comfort. For if God communicate any thing of himself unto the Sons of Man, it is by his Spirit, whose Office it is, *To lead them into all Truth*, John 16.13. *and to seal them up in the Truth, unto the day of Redemption*, Eph. 4. Al that is the Fathers, is Christs, and the Spirit takes of Christs, and so of the Fathers, and gives it unto such, for whom it is appointed, *John*, 16.15.

But in the depth of thy Misery, thou canst not receive the Spirit.

1. Thou canst receive nothing of the Father, though it were given thee, *John*, 14.17. *I will send the Comforter, whom the World cannot receive, because it doth not see, nor know him.* This is thy condition right: Thou canst not see, nor know the Spirit, and consequently, nor the Father: therefore not receive him, and therefore receive no good. . . .¹

Hooker's writings are full of such long stretches of nonsense and brutality. But to judge him by these alone, as Professor Tyler does in his discussion of the man,² is to do his memory a great injustice. The truth was that, like so many other Puritan divines of his day and afterward, including even Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards, he was not of Calvinistic savagery all compact. There was a great

that Faithful, and known Servant of Christ, Mr. Thomas Hooker, late Pastor of the Church at Hartford, in New-England. Printed from the Authors own Papers, written with his own Hand, and attested to be such, in an Epistle by Thomas Goodwin And Philip Nye. Printed by Peter Cole at the sign of the Printing-Press in Cornhill, neer the Royal Exchange. 1656. pp. 152-153.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 405.

² Tyler. Vol. I. pp. 193-204.

deal of genuine Christianity, genuine kindliness, in him, and when he was not set upon the Devil, he forgot Paul and remembered only Jesus. Here, for example, is a passage from "The Way of the Churches of New England":

These are times, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters the Sea: and these waters of the Sanctuary shall encrease from the ankles, unto the knees, thence unto the loins, and thence become a river that cannot be passed.

These are the times when people shall be fitted for such priviledges, fit I say to obtain them, and fit to use them.

Fit to obtain them at Gods hands, for Dan. 12.4. people shall run too and fro, and knowledge shall increase; they shall by the strength of their desires, improve the most painfull exercise of their thoughts, in the most serious search of the mystery of godliness, and bloud-hound like, who are best upon their prey, they shall most indefatigably trace the truth, and follow the least appearance of the footsteps thereof presented, until they come to see the formings and framings in the first rise, *Scire est per causam scire*, and thus digging for wisdom as for hid treasures, and seeking the Lord and his will, with their whole heart, they shall finde him, and understand it.

Fit to use them, now the Lord will write his laws in their hearts, and put it into their inward parts, and they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, For they shall all know me, from the least of them, to the greatest of them.

And whereas it hath been charged upon the people, that through their ignorance and unskilfulnesse, they are not able to wield such priviledges, and therefore not fit to share in any such power. The Lord hath promised: To take away the vail from all faces in the mountain, the weak shall be as David, and David as an Angel of God. The light of the Moon shall be as the Sun, and the Sun seven times brighter. When he hath not only informed them, but made them to be ashamed of their abominations, and of all that they have done, then he will show them the frame of his house, and the patern thereof, the going out thereof, the coming in thereof, the whole fashion thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, all the figures thereof, and laws thereof: And write them in their sight, that they may keep the whole fashion, and all the Ordinances thereof, and do them. Observe how often

the Lord expreseth the enlarged manifestations of himself in those many universals.¹

There are many such bits of relatively clear and kindly thinking in the writings of Hooker, even in those works mainly devoted to an onslaught on the Devil and his machinations. The best of them are to be found in a book entitled, "The Poor Doubting Christian Drawn to Christ: Wherein the main hindrances which keep men from coming to Christ are discovered; with special helps to recover God's favour." The Hooker of "The Soul's Humiliation" is hardly to be recognized in it. He speaks as a Christian, and not as a Puritan. Not one first-rate Puritan curse is to be found in it. It is thus rather strange that Professor Tyler does not even mention the book, and that neither do Professors Wendell, Trent and Cairns. The Rev. Dr. Joel Hawes has said of it: "I account it one of the best of his productions, breathing a spirit of the most elevated piety, and exhibiting wonderful skill in analyzing the operations of the heart, and applying the truths and promises of God's word. No person can read it without having the way of salvation laid open to him with great clearness; and doubting Christians will here find what should forever dissipate their doubts, and confirm them in faith and hope."² One can well sympathize with Dr. Hawes, for the book abounds with charitable feeling, and is remarkable for its "simplicity and force of expression."³ Says Hooker:

I come now to the cures of all those impediments, where, if we had the wisdom and care we should have, we might break through them all to Christ. The means especially are four, whereby we may be inwardly strengthened against them all, and be at last able to overcome, and put them to foil forever.

The first cure and help is this; we must not look too long, nor pore too much, or unwarrantably upon our own corruptions within, so far as to be disheartened by them from coming to the riches of God's grace. For this is a sure and everlasting, that whatsoever sight of sin unfits a man for mercy, when he may take,

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 6.

² "The Poor Doubting Christian Drawn to Christ: Wherein the main hindrances which keep men from coming to Christ are discovered; with special helps to recover God's favour," by the Rev. Thos. Hooker, First Minister of Hartford, Connecticut. With an abstract of the Author's Life. Also an Introduction by Edward W. Hooker, D.D., professor of sacred rhetoric in the Theological Institute of Connecticut, East Windsor, Hartford: Robins and Small. 1845. A foreword by the Rev. Joel Hawes, D.D., pastor of the First Church of Christ in Hartford.

³ *Ibid.* p. 8.

and it is offered; that sight of sin is ever sinful, though it have never so fair an outside of sorrow and humiliation. Namely, as when we think, and say, (as often we do,) had I a soul so thoroughly humbled and bruised, and softened, and so forth, I could do well enough. And thus the devil keeps us in sin by poring too long and much upon our sins; as thinking thereby to get from them. But such a course is a sinful course. Tell not me of sorrow, and repentance, and humiliation; all that sorrow, and humiliation, and repentance, is naught, that keeps a man from receiving mercy when there is need, and it is offered. See this is Abraham, he had this promise, that he should have a son in his old age: and Rom. 4, 19. *He being not weak in faith, regarded not his old age or deadness, nor the barrenness of Sarah's womb, but believed in him who had promised it.* There he rests and there he stays; he saw his body was dead, yet there was a living promise; and what though Sarah's womb was barren, yet the promise was fruitful. He knew his own deadness and her barrenness; but he stood not long there. As Abraham therefore, we may see our sins and consider our many weaknesses; but must not so settle upon them, or consider of them so as to be hindered by them from coming to God for mercy, which he freely offeres us, and we stand in need of. For while the soul of man is daily plodding upon misery and distempered life, these two things follow.

1. Stop the stream of God's promise, and let down the sluice against it, so that the promise cannot enter into us.

2. We set open the stream and flood-gates of corruption, and make it run most violently down, and to flood in upon us; and in the end to overwhelm us." ¹

The second "cure and help" is: "It bids check thine own heart for meddling with God's secrets, and for prying into his closet of hidden counsels." ² The third is the knowledge that "God loves us all, and will help us all." ³ The fourth is this: "It is especially to be observed by a Christian above all, in his proceedings with himself in bar of judgment; and that is, pass no hasty sentence against thyself but according to the evidence of the word." ⁴

"Who, or what word tells you, 'If I have had such a load of corruption, I shall never have grace?' Not the word of Christ, I am sure." ⁵

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 59-60.

² *Ibid.* p. 72.

³ *Ibid.* p. 76.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 77.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 79.

2. THOMAS SHEPARD

Thomas Shepard's leading biographer says of him that "in learning, talents, piety and influence, he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles of Congregationalism, in the New World."¹ Shepard was born at Towcester, near Northampton, in Northamptonshire, on November 5, 1605. His father, who was a grocer and an ardent Puritan, died when Thomas was ten years old; his mother had died when he was much younger. His youth, unlike that of Hooker, was not without serious moral blemishes. The horrible truth was that he was something of a roué while a student at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The first two years he was there he applied himself diligently to his studies, but completely neglected his soul. He associated with "loose and dissipated" students "until at length, upon a Saturday night, he drank so freely that he became grossly intoxicated, and was carried, in a state of insensibility, to the chambers of a student of Christ's College, where he awoke to consciousness late on Sabbath morning, sick and completely prostrated from the effects of the debauch."² There were times, indeed, when he was inclined to espouse atheism.³ But his friends and relatives soon decided to put a stop to all this dreadful stuff. One attempt they made at converting him failed miserably, but the second was a success.

Soon he launched into evangelism, and made a name for himself in this work. His Puritanism came to the ears of Archbishop Laud, who forced him out of the country. Shepard fled to the New World, and arrived in Boston in 1635. For the next fourteen years, until his death in 1649, he was minister of the church at Cambridge, succeeding Hooker.

He was one of the most valiant soldiers in the struggles against antinomianism, which spread over New England like a plague in the years 1636-7, and threatened to destroy the Boston Church. He interested himself in the education, not only of the colonists, but also of the neighboring Indians. Moreover, he was one of the founders of Harvard College. "Shepard was an admirer, probably a personal friend, of John Harvard. It is not unlikely that it was he who sug-

¹ "The Life of Thomas Shepard," by John A. Albro. Boston. The Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. 1847. *Lives of the Chief Fathers of New England*. Vol. IV. p. 10. I am indebted to Mr. Albro for the biographical material on Shepard.

² *Ibid.* p. 28.

³ *Ibid.* p. 31.

gested to Harvard the great benefit to the country that would result from the bequest which hastened the construction of the first college building." ¹

He was a man of weak frame, and not so proficient in harangue as, say, Hooker or John Cotton. But his relatively soft voice had just the same effect as their stronger ones. "There is a tradition, received by Mr. Prince from the old men of his day, and by him handed down to us, that 'he scarce ever preached a sermon but some or other of his congregation were struck with great distress, and cried out in agony, "What shall I do to be saved"; and that though his voice was low, yet so searching was his preaching, and so great a power attending, as a hypocrite could not easily bear it, and it seemed almost irresistible.'" ²

Shepard, like Hooker, was a voluminous writer, and his books were widely read. Some of them went through six, seven, nine, ten, eleven, twelve and fourteen editions.³ A great deal in praise has been said about his style and thought. Professor Tyler says this of him: "He had a subtile and commanding intellect; he was a profound thinker; his style was in the main clear, terse, abounding in energy, with frequent flashes of eloquence; and the charm of his diction was enhanced by the manner of his speech, which was almost matchless for its sweet and lofty grace, its pathos, its thrilling intensity, its ringing fulness and force." ⁴ His biographer is even more encomiastic: "Mr. Shepard's style is often rugged, but full of passages of sweet and quiet beauty, which make the reader think of pure water gushing from some craggy rock, or of flowers springing up on the side of a rough pathway." ⁵

One wonders where Professor Tyler and Mr. Albro found the basis for these eulogistic estimates. A study of all the extant writings of Shepard gives one nothing to get excited about. There were times when he was beyond understanding, and there were times when it was possible to make out what he was trying to say, and that is all that can be said about him. In other words, he was no better and no worse than the other divines of his New England. In fact, if it were

¹ "A Few Words about the Writings of Thomas Shepard," by Andrew McFarland Davis. *Proceedings of the Cambridge Historical Society*. Vol. III. Cambridge. 1909. p. 85. This is an excellent and comprehensive discussion of Shepard's works from the bibliographical point of view.

² "The Life of Thomas Shepard," by John A. Albro. p. 303.

³ This whole matter is discussed at length in the excellent monograph by Andrew McFarland Davis, p. 40 ff.

⁴ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 207.

⁵ Albro. pp. 307-308.

worth the space to go into such minutiae, it could probably be proven that Hooker, whom Professor Tyler attacks so fiercely, was a better writer than Shepard. As for Shepard being "a profound thinker" — that is simply absurd. He was no more a thinker than Captain John Smith or Governor Bradford or Governor Winthrop or Edward Winslow or Thomas Morton. Which is to say, he was no thinker at all — in the speculative sense.

Shepard's theology was the one current in his time. There is little evidence that he was capable of the occasional outbursts of genuine Christian feeling that we have seen in Hooker. Man, to Shepard, was of dreadful lusts all compact. "Every natural man and woman," he said, "is born full of all sin, as full as a toad is of poison, as full as ever his skin can hold; mind, will, eyes, mouth, every limb of his body, and every piece of his soul, is full of sin; their hearts are bundles of sin."¹ And he continued thus: "Thy mind is a nest of all the foul opinions, heresies, that ever were vented by any man; thy heart is a foul sink of all atheism, sodomy, blasphemy, murder, whoredom, adultery, witchcraft, buggery; so that if thou hast any good thing in thee, it is but as a drop of rose-water in a bowl of poison. . . . It is true thou feelest not all these things stir, ring in thee at one time . . . ; but they are in thee, like a nest of snakes in an old hedge."²

As for the tortures that await the sinful and unrepentant, no one, perhaps not even Jonathan Edwards, has ever described them more graphically than Shepard.

Death comes hissing . . . like a fiery dragon with the sting of vengeance in the mouth of it. . . . Then shall God surrender up thy foresaken soul into the hands of devils, who, being thy jailers, must keep thee, till the great day of account; so that as thy friends are scrambling for thy goods, and worms for thy body, so devils shall scramble for thy soul. . . . Thy forlorn soul shall lie moaning for the time past, now it is too late to recall again; groaning under the intolerable torments of the wrath of God present, and amazed at the eternity of misery and sorrow that is to come; waiting for that fearful hour, when the last trump shall

¹ "The Complete Works of Thomas Shepard." 3 volumes. Boston. 1853. Vol. I. p. 24. Editor's name not given.

² *Ibid.* p. 28.

blow, and body and soul meet to bear that wrath, — that fire that shall never go out.¹

He then elaborates and attempts to justify God's acts against the damned in this fashion:

God shall set himself like a consuming infinite fire against thee, and tread thee under his feet, who hast by sin trod him and his glory under foot all thy life. . . . I tell thee all the wisdom of God shall then be set against thee to devise torments for thee. . . . The torments which wisdom shall devise, the almighty power of God shall inflict upon thee; so as there was never such power seen in the making of the world, as in holding a poor creature under his wrath, that holds up the soul in being, and beats it with the other; ever burning like fire against a creature, and yet that creature never burnt up. Think not this cruelty: it is justice. What cares God for a vile wretch, whom nothing can make good while it lives? If we have been long in hewing a block, and we can make no meet vessel of it, put it to no good use for ourselves, we cast it into the fire. God heweth thee by sermons, sickness, losses and crosses, sudden death, mercies and miseries, yet nothing makes thee better. What should God do with thee, but cast thee hence? O consider this wrath before you feel it. . . . Thou canst not endure the torments of a little kitchen-fire, on the tip of thy finger, not one half hour together. How wilt thou bear the fury of this infinite, endless, consuming fire, in body and soul, throughout all eternity?²

This, of course, is generally straightforward writing, but we have come across scores of passages in the works of other early New Englanders which were just as good. Neither was Shepard much more profound than they in the field of speculative thinking. His "The Sincere Convert; discovering The Small Number of True Believers, and the Difficulties in The Way of Saving Conversion" was probably his most intellectual work. In it he tackled such problems as the existence of God, penitence, and reward and punishment. The most weighty thinking appears at the beginning of the book, and deals with his proofs that there is a God. Here they are:

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 35-39.

² *Ibid.* pp. 42-43.

1. *From the works of God*, Rom. i.20. When we see a stately house, although we see not the man who built it, although we know not the time when it was built, yet will we conclude thus:—Surely some wise artificer hath been working here. Can we, when we behold the stately theatre of heaven and earth, conclude other, but that the finger, arms, and wisdom of God hath been here, although we see not him that is invisible, and although we know not the time when he began to build? Every creature in heaven and earth is a loud preacher of this truth: Who set those candles, those torches of heaven? Who hung out those lanterns in heaven to enlighten a dark world? Who can make the stature of a man but one degree wiser than the stone out of which it is hewn? Could any frame a man, but one wiser and greater than man? . . .

2. *From the word of God*. There is such a majesty stirring and such secrets revealed in the word, that if men will not be wilfully blind, they cannot but cry out, The voice of God and not the voice of man.¹

3. *From the Children begotten of God*. For we may read in men's foreheads, as soon as ever they are born, the sentence of death; and we may see by men's lives what hellish hearts they have. Now there is a time that some of this monstrous brood of men are quite changed and made all new. They have new minds, new opinions, new desires, new joys, new sorrows, new speeches, new prayers, new lives; and such a difference there is betwixt these and others, that they are hated by others, who loved them well while they loved their sins. And whence came this strange change? Is it from themselves? no; it is to be hated of father, mother, friends, and maligned everywhere. Is it out of simplicity, or are their brains gone crazy? they were indeed once fools, but even simple men have been known to be more wise for the world, after they have been made new. But lastly, is it now from a slavish fear of hell, which marks this alteration? Nothing less; they abhor to live like slaves in bridewell, to do all for fear of the whip.

From God's register or notary, which is in every man; I mean

¹ "The Sincere Convert; discovering The Small Number of True Believers, and the Difficulties in The Way of Saving Conversion," by Thomas Shepard. London. The Religious Tract Society. 1839. pp. 18-19. In this reprint the obsolete words are exchanged for others of the same meaning.

*from the conscience of man; which telleth them there is a God; and although they silence it sometimes, yet in time of thunder, or some great plague, as Pharaoh, or at the day of death, then they are God's tribunal, then they acknowledge him clearly. The fearful terrors of conscience prove this, which like a bailiff arrests men for their debts. Therefore there is some Creditor to set it on. Sometimes like a hangman it torments men; therefore there is some strange Judge that gave it that command.*¹

Thus we see that Thomas Shepard in no way stood out from among his colleagues in Seventeenth Century New England. He was only another theologian. But he will be remembered for his contributions in another direction, regarding which he himself did not have the slightest suspicion. I refer to his writings about the Indians. The anthropological world is apparently ignorant of them and of their great scientific value. The blame for this neglect is largely to be placed at the door of the literary historians, not one of whom seems to have read them.

The two books in question are "The Day-Breaking, if not, The Sun-Rising of the Gospell with the *Indians in New-England*," and "The Clear Sun-shine of the Gospel Breaking Forth upon the Indians in New-England, or, An Historicall Narration of Gods Wonderfull Workings upon sundry of the Indians, both Chief Governors and Common-people, in bringing them to a willing and desired submission to the Ordinances of the Gospel; and framing their hearts to an earnest inquirie after the knowledge of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the World." There is some doubt about the authorship of the first, but the preponderance of opinion leans toward Shepard; regarding the authorship of the second there is no doubt.² Both books deal with the endeavors of Shepard and the Rev. John Eliot to convert the Indians. They had learned the Indian language, and taught them the Gospel in that tongue. But the Indians experienced great doubt about the wisdom of renouncing their old religion and espousing Christianity. They were troubled by many questions. Here are some of them, as set down by Shepard:

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 20-21.

² See the discussion of this matter in the introduction to the edition of both works in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. IV, third series. Cambridge: Charles-Folsom. 1834. "The Day-Breaking" was first published in London in 1647, and "The Clear Sun-shine" was published in London the year following.

Does Jesus Christ understand the Indian language?¹ . . .

Whether if the father bee naught, and the child good, will God bee offended with that child, because in the second Commandment it's said, that hee visits the sinnes of the fathers upon the children? . . .

How all the world is become so full of people, if they were all once drowned in the Flood?² . . .

How come the English to differ so much from the Indians in the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, seeing they had all at first one father?³

What Countrey man Christ was, and where he was borne?

How farre off that place was from here?

Where Christ now was?

*How they might lay hold on him, and where, being now absent from them?*⁴

If a man should be inclosed in Iron a foot thick and thrown into the fire, what would become of his soul, whether could the soul come forth thence or not?

Why did not God give all men good hearts that they might be good? . . .

Why did not God kill the Devill that made all men so bad, God having all power?

*If we made weak by sinne in our hearts, how can we come before God to sanctifie a Sabbath?*⁵

First, suppose a man before hee knew God, had had two wives, the first barren and childless, the second fruitfull and bearing him many sweet children, the question now propounded was, *Which of these two wives he is to put away?* if hee puts away; the first who hath no children, then hee puts her whom God and Religion undoubtedly binds unto, there being no other defect but want of children; if hee puts away the other, then he must cast off all his children with her as illegitimate, whom he so exceedingly loves. . . .

Secondly, suppose a man marry a *Squaw*, and shee departs and flies from her husband, and commits adultery with other remote *Indians*; but afterward it come to pass that she hearing the Word, and sorry for what shee hath done, she desires to

¹ "The Day-Breaking." p. 5.

² *Ibid.* p. 7.

³ *Ibid.* p. 10.

⁴ "The Clear Sun-shine." p. 45.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 47.

come to her husband againe, who remains still unmarried; *Whether should this husband upon her repentance receive her againe? and whether is he not bound thereunto so to doe?*

At the last Lecture at *Noonanetum* this *September*, there were divers questions asked: one was propounded by an old *Squaw*, a Widow: viz. *If when men know God, God loves them, why then is it that any one are afflicted after that they know him?*¹

Shepard and Eliot had been preaching to the Indians for more than a year, "shewing them their miserable condition without Christ, out of *Ephes. 2.1.* that they were dead in trespasses and sinnes, and in pointing unto them the Lord Jesus, who onely could quicken them."² Some of them became converted, but many more remained doubtful and kept on asking their questions. These questions troubled Shepard and Eliot a great deal. Most of them, according to Shepard's own confession, they did not answer, while others, not mentioned in his two books, were so intricate that he did not feel competent to answer them himself without the aid of other specialists in theology. "There have been many difficult questions propounded by them," he says in one place, "which we have been unwilling to engage ourselves in any answer unto, untill wee have the concurrence of others with us."³ Toward the end of this adventure in evangelization Shepard saw clearly the futility of it, and exclaimed: ". . . opposition there is from men and devils against it, and I feared in my own heart that within these few moneths there hath been some coolings among the best of these *Indians.*"⁴

It is rather strange that the anthropologists have almost unanimously overlooked the questions the Indians asked of Shepard and Eliot, for they are of the greatest value to the solution of the problem as to whether primitive people are capable of abstract and logical thinking. They plainly show that they are, and that, moreover, they are less gullible, at least in some matters, than whites. At one stroke they completely annihilate the case of Professor Lucien Lévy-Bruhl in his treatise, "*Les Fonctions Mentales dans les Sociétés Inférieures.*"

¹ *Ibid.* p. 63.

² *Ibid.* p. 45.

³ *Ibid.* p. 45.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 61.

3. JOHN COTTON

A divine who had a far greater influence on his time than either Hooker or Shepard was the Rev. John Cotton. He was, perhaps, the most influential Puritan in the entire history of New England. Professor Parrington rightly calls him "the greatest of the New England autocrats."¹ Another authority points out that even in his own day he was called "the Patriarch of New England."² Cotton was born in Derby, England, on December 4, 1585, and was descended from "gentle blood." His father was a successful lawyer. Unlike Shepard, he was a person "who from the cradle to the grave lived a long life without spot or blame, other than what arose from the mistakes of those around him, or those errors of his own which serve to associate him with weak humanity, but not with its vices or its crimes."³

He was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of thirteen, and later was chosen a fellow of Emmanuel. It was not long before he became dean of the latter. Even in those early days he showed himself to be a scholar of unusual breadth of learning. He first distinguished himself with a funeral oration in Hebrew on a local worthy, "in which he flourished away with so much artificial originality, affected eloquence and 'orations beauty' that he became to be regarded as the Xenophon of the university, and the special favorite of the muses."⁴ This reputation for learning he kept up to the end of his days. "From the hour when he entered Trinity College . . . to his death in 1652, he was a bookman, and in the sheer bulk of acquisition probably no man of his time outdid him."⁵

Like the other Puritan divines, he was chased out of England by Laud, and landed in Boston, in September, 1633. As has been said, he wielded tremendous power in the religious and secular life of the New England of his day. One historian writes, "Such was the authority he had in the hearts of the people, that whatever he delivered in the pulpit was soon put into an order of court, if of a civil,

¹ "Main Currents in American Thought," by Vernon Louis Parrington. Vol. I. p. 33.

² "The Life of John Cotton," by A. W. M'Clure. Boston: The Massachusetts Sabbath School Society. 1846. Lives of the Chief Fathers of New England. Vol. I. p. 13. I am indebted to this book for the greater part of the biographical material.

³ *Ibid.* p. 14.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁵ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 27.

or set up as a practice in the church, if of an ecclesiastical concernment." ¹

Of course, Calvin was his favorite author. In this connection he once said, "I have read the fathers, and the schoolmen, and Calvin too: but I find that he that has Calvin has them all." ² He was a hard worker. In later years he did not eat dinner, and used the time thus saved for reading, reflection and prayer. He was seldom sick, "though he was sparing of sleep, more sparing of words, but most sparing of time." ³ His influence was such that many prominent Englishmen of the Continent carried on a large correspondence with him. To Cromwell he was one "whom I love and honor in the Lord." ⁴

Personally, he was small of stature, had a fair complexion and a ruddy countenance, and inspired awe in all who knew him. "There was an inexpressible majesty in his mien, which compelled the respect of all who approached him: and the voice of profaneness was hushed when he was by. The inn-keeper at Derby, where Mr. Cotton often visited while he dwelt in England, used to tell his companions that he wished that man were out of his house, for he was not able to swear with that man under his roof." ⁵

In his early days he started out as a comparatively liberal theologian. When the Mrs. Hutchinson controversy arose he was inclined to be rather tolerant. Some of this tolerance, no doubt, was due to the fact that Mrs. Hutchinson and her husband were life-long admirers of his, and had followed him over here for the sake of not missing his preaching, and to the fact that Mrs. Hutchinson had expressly stated that he was one of the few "real" Christians in New England. But some of it was also due to his own liberality of outlook at the time. Precisely what Mrs. Hutchinson's views were it is difficult to make out. They were largely unintelligible. Perhaps the best summary of them is that made by Williston Walker, in his book "Ten New England Leaders":

Mrs. Hutchinson's views were essentially those now known as of the "higher life"; but they were presented in the form of an extreme assertion of the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer, that divine Person becoming so one with him as to render all other proof of sanctification than a consciousness of this indwelling not merely unnecessary but vain. He who sought

¹ Quoted in M'Clure. p. 121.

² Quoted in *Ibid.* pp. 270-271.

³ *Ibid.* p. 272.

⁴ Quoted in Parrington. Vol. I. p. 29.

⁵ M'Clure. p. 283.

evidence of Christian character in growing enjoyment of the worship of God, or improvement of conduct, was still under a "covenant of works"; while only he who based the proof of his acceptance with God as a sense of personal union with the divine Spirit was under the "covenant of grace."¹

As the Hutchinson uproar grew more intense, Cotton lost his liberality and became the most rabid theocrat in Massachusetts. Thus succumbed to the prevailing Puritan fanaticism a man who otherwise might have been one of the few shining lights in the early history of New England culture. It was he, in fact, probably more than anybody else, who let loose the plague. James Truslow Adams says of him:

With a broader mind and wider vision than any of the other clergy of the Colony, he had not the courage to stand alone, beyond a certain point, against their unanimity in intolerance. The higher promptings of his nature were crushed by the united voice of the priesthood, as Winthrop's had been so short a time before, and the noblest of the Colony's leaders, lay and clerical, from that time tended to sink to the lower level of their fellows.²

Democracy, to Cotton, was an invention of the devil, as witness:

It is better that the commonwealth be fashioned to the setting forth of God's house, which is his church: than to accommodate the church frame to the Civill state. Democracy, I do not conceyve that ever God did ordeyne as a fit government eyther for church or commonwealth. If the people be governors, who shall be governed? As for monarchy, and aristocracy, they are both of them clearely approoved, and directed in scripture, yet so as referreth the soveraigntie to himselfe, and setteth up Theocracy in both, as the best forme of government in the commonwealth, as well as in the church.³

Of course, he believed in no such thing as natural rights. To him there was only the will of God, and the ministers alone knew what it was.

¹ "Ten New England Leaders," by Williston Walker. N. Y. 1901. p. 76. Those beside Cotton who are considered in this book are William Bradford, Richard Mather, John Eliot, Increase Mather, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Chauncy, Samuel Hopkins, Leonard Woods and Leonard Bacon.

² "The Founding of New England." p. 170.

³ Quoted by Parrington. Vol. I. p. 31.

Now if it be a divine truth, that none are to be trusted with public permanent authority but godly men, who are fit materials for church membership, then from the same grounds it will appear, that none are so fit to be trusted with the liberties of the commonwealth as church members. For, the liberties of this commonwealth are such, as require men of faithful integrity to God and the state, to preserve the same. . . . Now . . . these liberties are such as carry along much power with them, either to establish or subvert the commonwealth, and therewith the church, which power, if it be committed to men according to their godliness . . . then, in case worldly men should prove the major part, as soon they might do, they would readily set over us magistrates like themselves, such as might . . . turn the edge of all authority and laws against the church and the members thereof, the maintenance of whose peace is the chief end which God aimed at in the institution of magistracy.¹

Cotton was far greater as an intellectual force than as a stylist. Yet Tyler is wrong when he says that there is not "a single passage of eminent force or beauty"² in his writings, such as are to be found in the writings of the other New England divines, Hooker and Shepard, for example. The fact is, there are many such. Here are some. Cotton is speaking of the spirit of prayer.

These ever go together, where there is a spirit of Grace, there is a spirit of Prayer. On the contrary, if you cannot pray, if you neither know what to pray, nor how to pray, if you go to Prayer unwillingly, not any work so wearisome, or straining to you as Prayer; if for any businesse that comes to you, you can be content to avoid Prayer; if any idle company come to your house, all must be set aside to mind them; not but that a man's businesse may sometimes be such as may hinder him for a time: but if a man be glad of any such occasion, and he comes to Prayer as a Beare to stake, then be not deceived, you may think you are gracious, but the truth is, unlesse you find some measure of ability, and liberty, and necessity to pray, you yet want a spirit of Grace. You would scarce think a child were living, if it did not cry as soone as it is borne; if still-borne, you take it for dead-borne. If thou beest a still-borne Christian, thou are dead-borne;

¹ Quoted by Parrington. Vol. I. p. 34.

² Tyler. Vol. I. p. 215.

if thou hast no wants to tell God of, if yet unlusty to pray, and would be glad of any occasion to shut out Prayer, be not deceived, where there wants Prayer there wants Grace; no Prayer, no Grace; little Prayer, little Grace; frequencie of Prayer, argues power of Grace.¹

Here is another. It shows Cotton in his finer moments. It is from "A Letter of Mr. *John Cottons*, Teacher of the Church in *Boston*, in New-England, to Mr. Williams a Preacher there." The Mr. Williams referred to is Roger Williams of Rhode Island, with whom Cotton carried on a long and sometimes acrimonious debate regarding political democracy and religious tolerance.

Though I have little hope (when I consider the uncircumcision of mine own lips, *Exod.* 6.12) that you will hearken to my voyce, who hath not hearkened to the body of the whole Church of Christ, with you, and the testimony, and judgement of so many Elders and Brethren of other Churches, yet I trust my labor will be accepted of the Lord; and who can tell that he may blesse it to you also, if (by his helpe) I indeavour to shew you the sandinesse of those grounds, out of which you have banished yours from the fellowship of all the Churches in these Countries. Let not any prejudice against my person (I beseech) forestall either your affection or judgment, as if I had hastened forward the sentence of your civill banishment; for what was done by the Magistrates, in that kinde, was neither done by my counsell nor consent, although I dare not deny the sentence passed to be righteous in the eyes of God, who hath said that he that with-holdeth the Corne (which is the staffe of life) from the people, the multitude shall curse him, *Prov.* 11.26. how much more shall they separate such from them as doe with-hold and separate them from the Ordinances or the Ordinances from them (which are in Christ the bread of life). . . . And to speake freely what I thinke, were my soule in your soules stead, I should think it a work of mercy of God to banish me from the civill society of such a Common wealth, when I could not injoy holy fellowship with any Church of God amongst them without sin. What should the Daughter of *Zion* doe in *Babell*? Why should she not hasten to flee from thence? *Zach.* 2.6,7.

¹ Sermon entitled, "God's Way." London. 1641. pp. 9-10.

I speake not these things (the God of Truth is my witnes) to adde affliction to your affliction, but (if it were the holy will of God) to move you to a more serious sight of your sin, and of the justice of Gods hand against it.¹

In this sort of English, to be sure, there is little distinction, and were its writer not worthy of mention otherwise, it would deserve oblivion. But it is as good as that of Hooker or Shepard.

4. JOHN ELIOT

The Rev. John Eliot was, with Daniel Gookin and Roger Williams, "the first herald of Christianity to the savages of North America."² Nothing is known of his life prior to his coming to this country in November, 1631. He settled in Boston first, and before long became the pastor of the First Church in Roxbury, a suburb. He was a plain but very powerful preacher, and was the object of the profoundest admiration in his community. Cotton Mather said of him, "There was a tradition among us, that the country could never perish so long as Eliot was alive,"³ and Thomas Shepard who knew him well said, "I think that we can never love and honor this man of God enough."⁴

Eliot was mainly interested in education, especially among the Indians. The latter, with their heathen ways, appealed to him from the first, and he was no sooner on this soil than he began his historic missionary work among them. "As a missionary, he relinquished the endearments of civilized society, encountered the dangers of the wilderness, and participated in the privations of the wild, precarious, and comfortless life of barbarians. With such holy ardor and untiring perseverance did he prosecute his great and commendable labors as to have acquired the exalted title of 'The Apostle to the Indians.'"⁵

He visited all the Indians in New England — there were about 50,000 of them in 1675 — and learned their various tribal languages.

¹ *Op. cit.* Text of the reprint in the Publications of the Narragansett Club. 1866. Providence, R. I. pp. 1-2.

² "A Sketch of the Life of the Apostle Eliot, Prefatory to a Subscription for Erecting a Monument to his Memory," by Henry Alexander S. Dearborn. Roxbury, Mass. 1850. p. 12. For the biographical material I am largely indebted to this pamphlet, one of the best and most authoritative in the entire literature on the subject. It is far better than the so-called official life by Convers Francis in Jared Sparks' American Biographical Series. Vol. V.

³ Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 22.

⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 22.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 12.

After King Philip's War he did all he could to calm down the ferocity of the colonists against the savages, but the prevailing lay and ecclesiastical opinion was against him. For a time, indeed, it seemed that his labors among the Indians was to stop because of the rising tide of public disapproval, but before he died on May 20, 1690, at the age of eighty-six, he lived to see himself honored throughout the Colony because of them. Eliot's numerous writings in English in behalf of the Indians were printed by "Samuel Green, who arrived with the colonists under Governor Winthrop. He came in a ship with Thomas, afterwards Governor Dudley, and lodged in an empty cask until a more commodious shelter could be obtained. He established in Cambridge, the first printing press in this country, which was placed under the direction of the president of the college. He had thirty children; nineteen by his first, and eleven by his second wife. His son Benjamin published the first paper in North America, in 1704. It was called the *News-Letter*." ¹

Eliot thought the Indians were the descendants of the lost ten tribes, and thus considered his mission among them to be particularly holy. Early in his missionary work he conceived the idea of translating the Bible into the Algonkin tongue, and immediately set to work realizing it. He did the whole translation alone. He completed the New Testament in 1661, and the Old two years later. At first they were published separately, but before long they were bound in one volume, which included also a translation of the Catechism and of the Psalms of David in Indian verse. The proof-sheets were corrected by a young Indian named James, who lived in the Indian town of Hassanamesitt, now Grafton. He had been taught to read and write English at the Indian School in Cambridge.

In his lifetime Eliot published two editions of his Bible, the first of 1500 copies and the second of 2000. He also translated other works: a Psalter in 1641, a Catechism in 1653, Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted" in 1664, a grammar in 1664, a logic primer in 1671; "The Practice of Piety," by L. Bayly, chaplain to James I, in 1665; a primer, of which there were four editions, and the last in 1687; and Shepard's "The Sound Believer" and "The Sincere Convert," bound together, in 1689.²

¹ "A Sketch of the Life of the Apostle Eliot, Prefatory to a Subscription for Erecting a Monument to his Memory," by Henry Alexander S. Dearborn. Roxbury, Mass. 1850. p. 17. The last two sentences here are not precisely correct. See the chapter on "Newspapers and Almanacs" below.

² *Ibid.* p. 18.

The translation of English books into the Indian languages hardly belongs to the province of American literature, yet Eliot's work is of great importance to the history, not only of American, but also of English, literature. "It was one of the most wonderful events in the history of literature; for no attempt had before been made to produce a version of that book, in any language other than that spoken by the translators, or one that was well-known, from a study of the numerous written volumes which has rendered it immortal."¹ The labors of the European translators were much easier than Eliot's. They always worked with a known language, and translated into a familiar one. Eliot also worked with a known language, but he translated into one that he had to learn from the beginning. And he had no assistance whatever, save that of an Indian boy, who did little more than read proof. Leusen, the professor of Hebrew at the University of Utrecht, dedicated his Hebrew-English Psalter, published in 1668, to Eliot, and in the dedicatory note spoke of his labors as *Atlæan*.²

Eliot's Bible was the first one in any language ever printed in this country. No edition in English was printed until that of Kneeland in 1782, 119 years after Eliot's translation. "The authorities at home would never permit a single edition being printed, except within this land [England]; and one of the most notable circumstances in the times of Roger Williams, John Eliot, Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards, David Brainard, and many other venerable, laborious, and useful characters, was this, that not one of these men ever perused any other than an imported English Bible."³

Beside his translations, Eliot also published numerous sermons in English, and a small book entitled, "The Christian Commonwealth." The latter was written in 1650, but not published till nine years later. It is a plea for theocracy in the vein of John Cotton. Eliot's English style has little to commend it. All the other Puritan divines we have considered were superior to him in this respect. But his memory will live because of his kindly work among the Indians and because of his translation of the Bible into their tongue. The latter was a truly

¹ *Ibid.* p. 18. See "Ten New England Leaders," by Williston Walker. N. Y. 1900. pp. 104-107; and also "John Eliot: The Puritan Missionary to the Indians," by H. E. Byington. N. Y. 1897. pp. 80-85.

² *Ibid.* p. 20.

³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, from an anonymous authority, p. 21. On this point there is a fine discussion in "The Congregationalism of the Last Three Hundred Years as Seen in its Literature," by Henry M. Dexter. Phila. 1880. p. 151 ff.

notable event, and it is rather strange that Tyler makes no mention of it in his generally excellent history, and that the Beards ignore Eliot completely in "The Rise of American Civilization."

5. OTHER THEOLOGICAL WRITERS

In addition to the theologians already noted there were, of course, many others, but none of them compared in influence to such men as Hooker, Shepard, Cotton or Eliot. The more prominent of these minor ones were Peter Bulkley, author "The Gospel Covenant, or the Covenant of Grace Opened," a collection of fiery sermons; William Hooke, who also wrote numerous sermons, but was a bit more kindly than Bulkley; Charles Chauncy, one of the early presidents of Harvard; John Higginson, whose election-sermon, "The Cause of God and His People in New England," made a stir in his day; William Stoughton, whose tract, "New England's True Interest, Not to Lie," was a powerful attack against the prevailing immorality in Boston; and Samuel Willard, author of "A Complete Body of Divinity," a collection of 250 sermons on the salient points of Puritan theology and polity. The latter was a man of some authority in his community. He was born in Concord in 1640, was president of Harvard for eight years, and died in 1707. His "Complete Body of Divinity" is a forbidding performance. It is a tome of 914 double-columned pages of very small type.

All of these divines were deeply learned in Greek, Hebrew and Calvinism. They were all supporters of the theocracy, and in their immediate environment commanded respect. Their writings deal in the main with highly technical points of theology, and are in large part beyond comprehension. They were local leaders of Puritanism upon whom the John Cottons could depend at all times.

CHAPTER IX (Part One)

New England

Early New England Verse and Prose

A. THE POETS

CHAPTER IX (Part One)

Early New England Verse and Prose

I. THE POETRY OF THE PURITAN OFFICERS OF STATE AND OF THE MINISTERS

THE WRITING OF VERSE IN THE ENGLAND OF THE SEVENTEENTH Century seems to have been almost as prevalent among the populace as the reading of comic supplements is now in America, and the colonists who crossed the ocean were unable to rid themselves of the habit. The annalists felt that they would not do their subjects justice without interspersing their accounts with jingles, and the Governors and preachers were likewise impelled when composing their tracts and sermons. As Professor Tyler has said, "Neither advanced age, nor high office, nor mental unfitness, nor previous condition of respectability, was sufficient to protect any one from the poetic vice."¹

The South was also addicted to the composition of "poetry." Nearly all of it, of course, was rubbish, yet it did produce one poem, "Bacon's Epitaph by his Man," that is memorable at least for its dignity and stately rhythm. New England produced far more "poetry," but it had nothing to show in any way comparable to "Bacon's Epitaph." The reason is plain. The Puritans regarded real poetry as against God, pagan and even immoral. The immortal Elizabethans were in all their glory at the time, but the New Englanders knew them not. Poetry to them was not a vehicle whereby to give expression to the joyous abandon of their souls. They never allowed themselves any abandon, and the only interest they had in their souls was as to their habitat in the after life.² When they did write verse it was only to perfume their pedestrian accounts of the climate and animals of their surroundings, or to praise a pious brother, especially if he

¹ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 267.

² See the excellent introduction to "Gravestones of Early New England," by Harriette Merrifield Forbes. Boston. 1927; and "Elegies and Epitaphs," The Club of Odd Volumes. Vol. IV. Boston. 1897. The latter book has the best collection of early New England elegies ever assembled.

was a divine, or to commemorate his passing into the Calvinistic Heaven. There was one exception among them; Thomas Morton of may-pole fame. The gay and reckless verses he wrote for his festivals at Merry Mount are not unreadable, and deserve better of the literary historians. But, as we have seen, he was not a Puritan. Instead, he was a waggish fellow, full of good, healthy spirits, and the Fathers were in mortal fear of him. His stay here was short, and much of it was spent in attempts to elude the Pilgrim jailers.

The Puritan magistrates were all prolific verse writers. Here, for example, is a typical poem by Governor Thomas Dudley, who died on July 31, 1653. Nathaniel Morton, the author of "New England's Memorial," said of it that it "may further illustrate his character, and give a taste of his poetical fancy; wherein, it is said he did excell."¹

*Dim eyes, deaf ears, cold stomach show
My dissolution is in view;
Eleven times seven near lived have I,
And noe God calls, I willing die:
My shuttle's shot, my race is run,
My sun is set, my deed is done;
My span is measur'd, tale is told,
My flower is faded and grown old,
My dream is vanish'd, shadow's fled,
My soul with Christ, my body dead;
Farewell dear wife, children and friends,
Hate heresy, make blessed ends;
Hear poverty, live with good men,
So shall we meet with joy again.*

*Let men of God in courts and churches watch
O'er such as do a toleration hatch;
Lest that ill egg bring forth a cockatrice,
To pison all with heresy and vice.
If men be left and otherwise combine,
My epitaph's, I died no libertine.²*

Governor Bradford of the Plymouth Colony was also given to the writing of verse. Fortunately, only one poem of his is extant. It

¹ "New England's Memorial," by Nathaniel Morton. First published in Cambridge in 1669, p. 166.

² *Ibid.* p. 167.

also appears in the above-mentioned book by Nathaniel Morton, who was his nephew. There is, it must be admitted, a certain microscopic dignity in it, but it never soars as do some of the prose passages in his history of Plymouth.

*From my years young in days of youth,
God did make known to me his truth,
And called me from my native place
For to enjoy the means of grace.
In wilderness he did me guide,
And in strange lands for me provide.
In fears and wants, through weal and woe,
A pilgrim, passed I to and fro:
Oft left of them whom I did trust;
How vain it is to rest on dust!
A man of sorrows I have been,
And many changes I have seen.
Wars, wants, peace, plenty, have I known;
And some advanc'd, others thrown down.
The humble poor, cheerful and glad;
Rich, discontent, sower and sad:
When fears and sorrows have been mixt,
Consolations come betwixt.
Faint not, poor soul, in God still trust,
Fear not the things thou suffer must;
For, whom he loves he doth chastise,
And them all tears wipes from their eyes.
Farewell, dear children, whom I love,
Your better Father is above:
When I am gone; he can supply;
To him I leave you when I die.
Fear him in truth, walk in his ways,
And he will bless you all your days.
My days are spent, old age is come,
My strength it fails, my glass near run.
Now I will wait, when work is done,
Until my happy change shall come,
When from my labors I shall rest,
With Christ above for to be blest.¹*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 171-172.

The death of Bradford naturally set all the literate Puritans working upon his epitaph, and numerous samples of their labors are in existence. Here is one of the more stately ones, by Major Josias Winslow:

William Bradford, Anagr.¹

*I made law for bridl!
For law I make bridl!*

*See how God honored hath this worthy's name,
To make it spell his virtue, and proclaim
His rare endowments, us'd for God and us:
Now such as honor God, he'll honor thus.*

*Both just and gentle, merciful and just;
And yet a man, and yet compos'd of dust!
Yes, God within these slender walls can find
A noble, virtuous, studious, active mind.*

*God was the guider of his childhood, youth;
God did preserve him ever in the truth,
And gave him grace to own him when but young,
Whom afterward he made champion strong,*

*For to defend his people, and his cause,
By wisdom, justice, prudence, and by laws;
And, most of all, by his own good example,
A pattern fit to imitate most ample.*

*He's happy, happy thrice; unhappy we
That still remain more changes here to see:
Let's not lament that God hath taken him
From troubles hence, in seas of joy to swim.*

*But let's bewail that we have so neglected
Duty to God, or men have disrespected;
With earnest lamentations let's lament;
And, whilst we may, let's seriously repent.*

¹ An anagram, as everyone knows, consists in the transmutation of one word into another, or turning the same letters into different words. Writing anagrams was a common sport in England at the time, and was ridiculed by Addison in the *Spectator*, No. 60. The Puritans were very fond of it, Cotton Mather especially among them.

*That we have not improved as we might,
For God, and for ourselves, this worthy wight;
And now that God hath Moses tak'n away,
Let's pray that he would give us Joshua.*

*Why mourne the people thus for me, since I
In heavens dwell, shall to eternity?
Let not so many tears fall from my friends;
Live holy, happy, God will recompense
Into your bosoms all your love again,
And your affections whilst I did remain
Amongst you, but now you must refrain.*

*Bear up your hearts, dear hearts, when thoughts of me
Run in your minds, with this the time will be,
And every hour brings it on apace,
Dear friends, when we for ever shall embrace.
Farewell but for a season then, farewell;
Our next embraces shall the rest excel,
Rest happy, children, friends and tender wife,
Death but begins the godly's happy life.¹*

Captain Edward Johnson's "Wonder-Working Providence" probably contains more "poems" than any other early New England chronicle. The book, indeed, opens with one.

Records for the Towne of Woburne
ffrom the year 1640 the 8 day of the 10 month
Paulisper Fui

*In peniles age I woburne Towne began;
Charls Towne first would the Court my lins to span.
To vewe my land place, compild body Reare,
Nowell, Sims, Sedgwick, thes my paterons were.
Sum fearing ile grow great upon these grownds,
Poor I was putt to nurs among the Clownes,
Who being taken with such might things
As has bin work of Noble Queeins and Kings,*

¹ "New England's Memorial," by Nathaniel Morton. pp. 174-175.

*Till Babe gan crye and great disturbance make;
 Nurses Repent they did hare undertake.
 One leaves here quite; an other hee doth hie
 To foren lands, free from the Babys Crye;
 To [two] of seven, seing nursing provd soe thwarte,
 Thought it more ease in following of the Carte.
 A naighbhour by, hopeing the the Babe wold bee
 A pritty Girle, to Rocking har went hee. . . .¹*

The passing of Governor John Endicott was an event of the first importance in the history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It moved the whole Colony to verse writing. Captain Johnson had this to say about it:

John Endicat twice Governour of the English, inhabiting
 the Mattachusetts Bay in N. England.

*Strong valiant John, wilt thou march on, and take up station first;
 Christ cal'd hath thee, his Souldier be, and fail not of thy
 trust;
 Wilderness wants Christ's grace supplants, then pant his Churches
 pure.
 With Tongues gifted, and graces led, help thou to his procure;
 Undaunted thou wilt not allow Malignant men to wast
 Christ's Vineyard heere, whose grace should cheer his well-
 beloved's tast.
 Then honoured be, thy Christ hath thee their Generall promoted:
 To show their love, in place above, his people have thee voted.
 Yet must thou fall to grave with all the Nobles of the Earth,
 Thou rotting worme, to dust must turn, and worse but for new
 birth.²*

Captain Johnson was a great admirer of the Rev. John Eliot, and supported his missionary work with enthusiasm. Indeed, he thought so highly of him that he found it possible to sing his praises properly only in verse:

¹ "Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence," edited by J. Franklin Jameson. Reproduced under the auspices of the American Historical Association. N. Y. 1910. pp. 7-8.

² *Ibid.* pp. 44-45.

Mr. Eliot Pastor of the Church of Christ at Roxbury, in New England, much honoured for his labours in the Lord

*Great is thy worke in Wildernesse, Oh man,
 Young Eliot neere twenty yeares thou hast
 In Western world with miccle toile thy span
 Spent well-neere out, and now thy gray hayrs gracest
 Are by thy Land-Lord Christ, who makes use of thee
 To feed his flock, and heathen people teach
 In their own Language, God and Christ to see;
 A Savior their blind hearts could not reach.
 Poore naked Children come to learn Gods Mind
 Before thy face with reverend regard;
 Blesse God for thee may these poore heathen blind,
 That from thy mouth Christs Gospell sweete have heard.
 Eliot, thy name is through the wild woods spread,
 In Indians mouths frequent's thy name, for why?
 In sundry shapes the Devills made them dread;
 And now the Lord makes them their Wigwam fly.
 Rejoyce in this, nay rather joy that thou
 Amongst Christs Souldiers hast thy name sure set,
 Although small gaine on Earth accrew to you,
 Yet Christ to Crowne will thee to Heaven soone set.¹*

This is surely high, though rather confused and lumbering, praise, but that which Johnson accorded to the memory of Governor Winthrop went even further:

Jon Winthrop Esq. Eleven times Governour of the English Nation, inhabiting the Mattacusets Bay in New England.

*Why leavest thou, John, thy station, in Suffolk, thy own soile,
 Christ will have thee a pillar be, for's people thou must toyle;
 He chang'd thy heart, then take his part, 'gainst prelates proud
 invading
 His Kindly throne set up alone, in wilderness their shading.
 His little flocks from Prelates knocks, twice ten years rul'd thou
 hast,
 With civill sword at Christs word, and eleven times been trast*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 72-73.

*By name and Note, with peoples vote, their Governour to be;
 Thy means hast spent, 'twas therefore lent to raise this work
 by thee.
 Well arm'd and strong with sword among Christ armies march-
 eth he,
 Doth valiant praise, and weak one raise, with kind benignity.
 To lead the Van 'gainst Babylon, doth worthy Winthrop call;
 Thy Progeny shall Battell try, when Prelacy shall fall.
 With fluent Tongue thy Pen doth run, in learned Latine phrase,
 To Sweades, French, Dutch, thy Neighbours, which thy lady
 rhetorick praise.
 Thy bounty feeds Christs servant needs, in wilderness of wants
 To Indians thou Christs Gospell now 'mongst heathen people
 plants.
 Yet thou poore dust, now dead and must to rottenness be brought,
 Till Christ restore thee glorious, more then can of dust be
 thought.¹*

The New England divines were just as prolific of verse as the magistrates. Naturally, they specialized in epitaphs on their colleagues. John Cotton's celebrated obituary on Hooker I have already quoted. The following elegy on Mr. Ralph Partridge, a beloved divine, who died in 1658, was written by a teacher, "a true admirer of his worth."² It is rather long, and so I give only the first part:

*Not rage, but age; not age, but God's decree,
 Did call me hence, my Saviour Christ to see,
 And to embrace, and from his hand receive
 My crown of Glory. Oh! who would not leave
 A flattering world, nay friends, or what's most dear,
 The saint's communion that's enjoyed here,
 At once to have God, Christ, saints, angels, all,
 To make complete, and sum our joy's total?
 Now I behold God's glory face to face;
 Now I sit down with Christ, who've run my race;
 Now I sing praise to God, and to the Lamb.*

¹ "Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence," edited by J. Franklin Jameson. Reproduced under the auspices of the American Historical Association. N. Y. 1910. p. 76

² "New England's Memorial," by Nathaniel Morton. p. 182.

*R un is his race,
 A nd his work done,
 L eft earthly place,
 P artridge is gone,
 H e's with the Father and the Son.*

*P ure joys and constant do attend
 A ll that so live, such is their end.
 R eturn he shall with Christ again,
 T o judge both just and sinful men.
 R ais'd is this bird of paradise;
 I oy heaven entered breaks the ice.
 D eath underfoot he trodden hath;
 G race is to glory straightest path;
 E ver enjoys love free from wrath.¹*

Even more consoling was the epitaph on Mr. William Paddy, a celebrated deacon and man of parts. It was also written by an anonymous clerical friend.

*W eep not dear wife, children, nor dear friends,
 I live a life of joys that never ends.
 L ove God, and fear him to end of your days;
 L ive unto him, but die to sin always.
 I n heavenly place of bliss my soul doth rest,
 A mong the saints and angels I am blest;
 M uch better here, than in the world at best.*

*P raising my God is now my great employ,
 A bove such troubles as did me annoy.
 D id but my friends know what I here possess,
 D oubtless it would cause them to mourn the less;
 Y our souls with mine e'er long shall meet in bliss.²*

2. WILLIAM MORRELL

In addition to the annalists who interspersed their prose with verse there was a group of versifiers, who though not poets by profession, achieved something that may be described as renown for what poetry

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 182-183.

² *Ibid.* p. 184.

they did write. Some of them were clergymen, and others were teachers in the secular schools. Perhaps the earliest of the group was William Morrell, a resident of Plymouth in the first quarter of the Seventeenth Century. He is chiefly known for a long poem, "Nova Anglia," which he wrote originally in Latin and later translated himself into English. It was published in London in 1625. Like nearly all the secular writing of the New England of the time, it was little more than a piece of advertising, composed primarily for the purpose of inducing the people back home to come over here or to invest their money in New World projects. The Latin original, as Professor Tyler says,¹ is much better than the English translation. An idea of Morrell's poetic style in English can be obtained from the following excerpt.

*A royall worke well worthy England's king,
These natives to true truth and grace to bring.
A noble worke for all these, noble peares
Which guide this state in their superiour spheres.
You hold Aarons let your sensors nere
Cease burning, till these men Jehovah feare.
Westward a thousand leagues a spacious land
Is made unknown to them that it command.
Of fruitful mould, and no lesse fruitless main
Inrich with springs and prey high land and plaine.
The light well tempred, humid ayre, whose breath
Fils full all concaves betwixt heaven and earth,
So that the region of the ayre is blest
With what earth's mortals wish to be possest.*

*O happie planter, if you knew the height
Of planter's honours where ther's such delight;
There nature's bounties, though not planted are,
Great store and sorts of berries great and faire:
The filberd, cherry, and the fruitful vine,
Which cheares the heart and makes it more divine.
Earth's spangled beauties pleasing smell and sight
Objects for gallant choyce and chiefe delight.
A ground-nut theere runnes on a grassie threed,
Along the shallow earth as in a bed,*

¹ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 270.

*Yealow without, thin filmd, sweete, lilly white,
Of streangth to feede and cheare the appetite.
From these our natures may have great content,
And good subsistence when our meanes is spent.¹*

3. AUTHORS OF THE PREFATORY POEMS TO ANNE BRADSTREET'S BOOKS

As was the custom in the mother country, the colonial versifiers were in the habit of prefacing the works of the more prominent Parnassians among them with commendatory verses. Naturally, when the works of Anne Bradstreet, the most celebrated poet in early New England, appeared, there were a flock of such prefatory verses. They were all full of extravagant praise. The following one is by Nathaniel Ward, who also achieved some renown for his prose:

*Mercury showed Apollo Bartas' book,
Minerva this, and wished him well to look
And tell uprightly which did which excel.
He viewed and viewed, and vowed he could not tell.
They bid him hemisphere his moldy nose
With his cracked leering glasses, for it would pose
The best brains he had in his old pudding-pan,
Sex weighed, which best — the woman, or the man?
He peered and pored, and glared, and said, forwore,
"I'm e'en as wise now as I was before."
They both 'gan laugh, and said it was no Mar'l,
The Authoress was a right du Bartas girl.
"Good sooth!" quoth the old Don, "tell ye me so?
I muse whither at length these girls will go.
It half revives my chill frost-bitten blood
To see a woman once do aught that's good;
And chode by Chaucer's boots and Homer's furs,
Let men look to it lest women wear the spurs."²*

¹ "A Library of American Literature." in 11 volumes, edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson. N. Y. 1889-1890. Vol. I. pp. 138-139.

² "The Poems of Mrs. Anne Bradstreet. 1612-1672. Together with her Prose Remains." With an introduction by Charles Eliot Norton. The Duodecimos. Boston. 1897. Edited by Frank E. Hopkins. p. 5.

Below is another. The author, John Rogers, was born in England in 1630, and came here with his father six years later. He was graduated from Harvard in 1649, and studied both divinity and medicine, but preached very little and devoted the greater part of his life to the practice of medicine. In 1682 he succeeded the Rev. Urian Oakes as president of Harvard. He died suddenly on July 2, 1786, the day after commencement, during an eclipse of the sun. "He had requested, in the previous December, that the commencement exercises should be held a day earlier than usual, as he feared the eclipse might interfere with them."¹ His prefatory poem to the works of Anne Bradstreet is pretty bad, despite Professor Tyler's opinion that it is highly imaginative,² but it is worth quoting in full as showing the versifying abilities of one of the intellectual leaders among the Puritans:

Vpon Mrs. Anne Bradstreet. Her Poems, &c.

*Madam, twice through the Muses Grove I walkt,
Under your blissful bowres, I shrowding there,
It seem'd with Nymphs of Helicon I talkt:
For there those sweet-lip'd Sisters sporting were,
Apollo with his sacred Lute sate by,
On high they made their heavenly Sonnets flye,
Posies around they strow'd, of sweetest Poesie.*

2.

*Twice have I drunk the Nectar of your lines,
Which high Sublim'd my mean born phantasie,
Flusht with these streams your Maronean wines
Above my self rapt to an extasie;
Methought I was upon Mount Hiblas top,
There where I might those fragrant flowers lop,
Whence did sweet odors flow, and honey spangle drop.*

3.

*To Venus shrine no Altars raised are,
Nor venom'd shalfts from painted quiver fly,
Nor wanton Doves of Aphrodites Carr,
Or fluttering there, nor here forlornly lie,*

¹ "The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse," edited by John Harvard Ellis. Charlestown, Mass. 1867. p. 96.

² Tyler. Vol. II. p. 13.

*Lorne Paramours, not chattering birds tell news
How sage Apollo, Daphne hot pursues,
Or stately Jove himself is wont to haunt the slews.*

. . .

6.

*This seem'd the Scite of all those verdant vales,
And purled springs whereat the Nymphs do play,
With lofty hills, where Poets rear their tales,
To heavenly vaults, which heav'nly sound repay
By ecchoes sweet rebound, here Ladyes kiss,
Circling nor songs, nor dances circle miss;
But whilst those Syrens sung, I sunk in sea of bliss.*

7.

*Thus weltering in delight, my virgin mind
Admits a rape; truth still lyes undiscr'i'd,
Its singular, that plural seem'd, I find,
'Twas Fancies glass alone that multipli'd;
Nature with Art so closely did combine,
I thought I saw the Muses trebble trine,
Which prov'd your lonely Muse, superiour to the nine.*

8.

*Your only hand those Poesies did compose,
Your head the source, whence all those springs did flow,
Your voice, whence changes sweetest notes arose,
Your feet that kept the dance alone, I trow:
Then vail your bonnets, Poetasters all,
Strike, lower amain, and at these humbly fall,
And deem your selves advanc'd to be her Pedestal.*

9.

*Should all with lowly Congies Laurels bring,
Waste Floraes Magazine to find a wreathe;
Or Pineus Banks 'twere too mean offering,
Your Must a fairer Garland doth bequeath
To guard your fairer front; here 'tis your name
Shall stand immarbled; this your little frame
Shall great Colossus be, to your eternal fame.*

*I'll please my self, though I my self disgrace,
What errors here be found, are in Errantaes place.¹*

The high poetical imagination that Professor Tyler saw in Rogers was really nothing more than a vague, confused and indiscriminating liking for classical Greek fancy, which was made even more repellent by Rogers' inability to compose in anything but the most barbaric rhythms.²

John Norton was a nephew of the more celebrated Rev. John Norton, of the First Church of Boston. He was graduated from Harvard in 1671, and was ordained minister of the First Church of Hingham seven years later. He probably edited the second edition of Anne Bradstreet's works.³ He is remembered solely for his elegy on Mrs. Bradstreet. Professor Tyler found in it both force and beauty,⁴ but here, as in the case of John Rogers, he was overenthusiastic. The elegy follows:

*A Funeral Elegy, Upon that Pattern and Patron of Virtue, the
truly pious, peerless & matchless Gentlewoman, Mrs. Anne
Bradstreet, Mirror of Her Age, Glory of Sex, whose
Heaven-born-Soul leaving its earthly Shrine,
chose its native home, and was taken to
its Rest, upon 16th. Sept. 1672.*

*Ask not why hearts turn Magazines of passions,
And why that grief is clad in sev'ral fashions;
Why She on progress goes, and doth not borrow
The smallest respite from th' extreme of sorrow,
Her misery is got to such an height,
As makes the earth groan to support its weight,
Such storms of woe, so strongly have beset her,
She hath no place for sorse, nor hope for better;
Her comfort is, if any for her be,
That none can shew more cause of grief than she.
Ask not why some in mournful black are clad;
The Sun is set, there needs must be a shade.*

¹ Ellis edition of the works of Anne Bradstreet. pp. 93-96.

² One of the early enthusiasts over this Rogers poem was Samuel Kettell, author of "Specimens of American Poetry. With Critical and Bibliographical Notices." Boston. 1829. 3 volumes. See Vol. I, xxxiii. This work was the very first full length study of New England and Southern verse.

³ This is the opinion of Mr. Ellis, and is probably correct. *Op. cit.* p. 413.

⁴ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 10.

*Ask not why every face a sadness shrowdes;
 The setting Sun ore-cast us hath with Clouds.
 Ask not why the great glory of the Skye
 That gilds the starrs with heavenly Alchamy,
 Which all the world doth lighten with his rayes,
 The Persian God, the Monarch of the dayes;
 Ask not the reason of his extasie,
 Paleness of late, in midnight Majesty,
 Why that the palefac'd Empress of the night
 Disrob'd her brother of his glorious light.
 Did not the language of the starrs foretel
 A mournfull Scène when they with tears did swell?
 Did not the glorious people of the Skye
 Seem sensible of future misery?
 Did not the lowring heavens seem to express
 The worlds great lose, and their unhappiness?
 Behold how tears flow from the learned hill,
 How the bereaved Nine do daily fill
 The bosome of the fleeting Air with groans,
 And wofull Accents, which witness their moanes.*

*Some doe for anguish weep, for anger I
 That ignorance should live, and Art should die.
 Black fatal, dismal, inauspicious day,
 Unblest for ever by Sol's precious Ray,
 Be it the first of miseries to all;
 Or last of Life, defam'd for Funeral.
 When this day yearly comes, let every one,
 Cast in their urne, the black and dismal stone.
 Succeeding years as they their circuit goe,
 Leap o're this day, as a sad time of woe. . . .¹*

This is plainly the work, not of a poet, but of a bookish man trying to be a poet. Professor Charles Eliot Norton, a descendant, is much more correct than Tyler when he says of it that the "verses are artificial in sentiment, extravagant in expression, and cumbered with pedantry."²

¹ Ellis edition of the works of Anne Bradstreet, pp. 409-411.

² "The Poems of Mrs. Anne Bradstreet . . ." With an introduction by Charles Eliot Norton, edited by Frank E. Hopkins. p. viii.

4. URIAN OAKES

Urian Oakes was born in 1631, and was graduated from Harvard. He devoted himself to theology, and after spending some time in England, was elected pastor of the church at Cambridge. In 1675 he was chosen president of Harvard. He was an eminent preacher, but he also had a reputation of a sort as a poet. Only one specimen of his verse remains. It was published in 1677. It was an elegy upon the death of a dear friend, one Thomas Shepard, a minister of the church at Cambridge, and not to be confused with Thomas Shepard of the First Church of Boston. The poem is 312 lines long, and has fifty-two stanzas of six lines each. Professor Tyler thinks that "it is among the few examples of genuine poetry produced in America in the colonial time,"¹ and in another place, in fact, says of it that it "reaches the highest point touched by American poetry during the same era."² It seems to me, however, that it is commonplace, and by no means devoid of affectation. A few stanzas:

*Reader! I am no poet; but I grieve.
Behold here what that passion can do,
That forced a verse, without Apollo's leave,
And whether the learned Sisters would or no.
My griefs can hardly speak; my sobbing muse
In broken terms our sad bereavement rues.*

*Oh! that I were a poet now in grain!
How would I invoke the Muses all
To deign their presence, lend their flowing vein,
And help to grace dear Shepard's funeral!
How would I paint our grief! succors borrow
From art and fancy, to limn our sorrow.*

*And could my pen ingeniously distil
The purest spirits of a sparkling wit,
In rare conceits, the quintessence of skill
In elegiac strains — none like to it —
I should think all too little to condole
The fatal loss to us of such a soul.*

¹ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 163.

² Tyler. Vol. II. p. 16.

. . .

*Away, loose-reined careers of poetry;
The celebrated Sisters may be gone;
We need no mourning women's elegy,
No forced, affected, artificial tone;
Great and good Shepard's dead! Ah! this alone
Will set our eyes abroach, dissolve a stone.*

. . .

*Poetic raptures are of no esteem;
Daring hyperboles have here no place;
Luxuriant wits on such a copious theme
Would shame themselves, and blush to show their face.
Here's worth enough to overmatch the skill
Of the most stately Poet Laureate's quill.*

. . .

*Art, nature, grace, in him were all combined,
To show the world a matchless paragon;
In whom, of radiant virtues no less shined
Than a whole constellation; but he's gone!
He's gone, alas! Down in the dust must lie
As much of this rare person as could die.*

. . .

*If to have solid judgment, pregnant parts,
A piercing wit, and comprehensive brain;
If to have gone the round of all the arts,
Immunity from death could gain;
Shepard would have been death-proof, and secure
From all that all-conquering hand, I'm very sure.*

. . .

*In holy life, and deeds of charity,
In grace illustrious, and virtue tried,
If modest carriage, rare humility,
Could have bribed death, good Shepard had not died.
Oh! but inexorable Death attacks
The best men, and promiscuous havoc makes.*

. . .

*Farewell, dear Shepard! Thou art gone before,
Made free of heaven, where thou shalt sing loud hymns*

*Of high, triumphant praises evermore,
In the sweet choir of saints and seraphims.*

*My dearest, inmost, bosom-friend is gone!
Gone is my sweet companion, soul's delight!
Now in an huddling crowd I'm all alone,
And almost could bid all the world — Good-night.¹*

5. BENJAMIN TOMPSON

Benjamin Tompson was born on July 14, 1642, in what is now Quincy, Mass. He was the son of a minister,² and was graduated from Harvard at the age of twenty, but strangely enough did not enter the ministry. Instead, he spent the rest of his days teaching school, practising medicine—and writing poetry. Toward the end of his life his neighbors spoke of him as “a man of great learning and wit, well acquainted with the Roman and Greek writers and a good poet.” He wrote a great deal of elegiac verses, and was also one of the numerous preface writers to Cotton Mather’s “Magnalia.”

He was not only the first native poet but also “the first poet writing within our borders whose culture and subjects are of the country itself.”³ His two best known works are “New England’s Crisis” and “New-England’s Tears,” both dealing with incidents of King Philip’s War. The two of them were published in 1676, in Boston and London simultaneously. Professor Tyler sees great satirical power in them,⁴ but one finds it extremely difficult to locate this power. Mr. Hall’s judgment of Tompson is much more judicious: “Tompson’s work is not art. . . . [He] was familiar with the best Latin and Greek poetry. Yet when he wrote in English he emulated the worst characteristics of English and European poetry current since a generation before his birth.”⁵

A glance at “New England’s Crisis” shows that Mr. Hall had ample basis for his judgment. The full title of the poem is “New England’s Crisis, or a Brief Narrative, of New-England’s Lamentable Estate at

¹ In Club of Odd Volumes. Vol. IV, N. Y. 1896.

² For the biographical and bibliographical material here I am indebted to “Benjamin Tompson 1642–1714. First Native Poet of America. His Poems.” Collected with an introduction by Howard Hudson Hall. Boston. 1924.

³ *Ibid.* p. 22.

⁴ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 21.

⁵ Hall edition of Tompson’s poems, pp. 27–28.

present, compar'd with the former (but few) years of Prosperity. Occasioned by many unheard of *Crueltys* practiced upon the *Persons* and *Estates* of its united *Colonies*, without respect of *Sex*, *Age* or *Quality* of *Persons*, by the Barbarous *Heathen* thereof. *Poetically Described*. By a Well wisher to his Countrey . . . Boston, Printed and sold by *John Foster*, over against the Sign of the *Dove*. 1676." The first forty or fifty lines are typical of what follows:

*In seventy five the Critick of our years
Commenc'd our war with Phillip and his peers.
Whither the sun in Leo had inspir'd
A feav'rish heat and Pagan spirits fir'd?
Whither some Romish Agent hatcht the plot?
Or whither they themselves? appeareth not.
Whither our infant thrivings did invite?
Is hard to say; but Indian spirits need
No grounds but lust to make a Christian bleed.*

*And here methinks I see this greazy Lout
With all his pagan slaves coil'd round about,
Assuming all the majesty of his throne
Of rotten stump, or of the rugged stone
Could yield; casting some bacon-rine-like looks,
Enough to fright a Student from his books,
Thus treat his peers, next to them his Commons,
Kennel'd together all without a summons.
My friends, our Fathers were not half so wise
As we our selves who see with younger eyes,
They sel our land to english men who teach
Our nation all so fast to pray and preach:
Of all our countrey they enjoy the best,
And quickly they intend to have the rest.
This no wunnegin, so big matchit law,
Which our old fathers fathers never saw.
These english make and we must keep them too,
Which is too hard for them or us to doe,
We drink we so big whipt, but english they
Go sleep, no more, or else a little pay.
Me meddle Squaw me hang'd, our fathers kept
What Squaws they would whither they wakt or slept.*

*Now if you'll fight Ile get you english coats,
 And wine to drink out of the Captains throats.
 The richest merchants houses shall be ours,
 Wee'll ly no more on matts or dwell in bower
 Wee'll have their silken wives take they our Squaws,
 They shall be whipt by virtue of our laws.¹*

6. PETER FOLGER

On April 23, 1676, Peter Folger, a land-surveyor by trade and one of the first settlers of Nantucket, whose youngest daughter, Abiah, became the mother of Benjamin Franklin, wrote a doggerel poem of some four hundred lines, entitled, "A Looking Glass for the Times, or the Former Spirit of New England Revived in This Generation."² The King Philip War was then in progress, and Folger took the stand that the atrocities committed by the Indians were God's punishment to the Colonies for allowing their magistrates to prosecute all those who did not agree with their religious views. After saying that he did not intend to be disrespectful to the magistrates, he went on thus:

*But that which I intend hereby,
 is that they [the magistrates] would keep bound,
 And meddle not with God's Worship,
 for which they have no ground.
 And I am not alone herein,
 there's many hundreds more
 That have for many Year's ago
 spake much upon that Score,
 Indeed I really believe
 it's not your Business
 To meddle with the Church of Christ,
 in Matters more or less,
 There's work enough to do besides,
 to judge in mine and thine
 To succour Poor and Fatherless,
 that is the Work in fine.³*

¹ Hall edition of Tompson's poems. pp. 53-54.

² The edition used here is No. 16 in the Rhode Island Historical Tracts. Published in 1883, by Sidney S. Rider, who is also the author of the brief introductory note.

³ *Ibid.* p. 12.

There is, of course not the faintest spark of poetry in this, but Professor Tyler, thinking that Folger published it in his lifetime, was moved to say that "he nobly declined all shirking of responsibility in the affair, but just wove his name and abode into the tissue of his verse."¹ It is true that Folger signed his name to his poem, and that he also put the date of its writing down — April 23, 1676. But the most exhaustive research shows that it was not printed till 1763, nearly a hundred years afterward.² Professor Tyler's praise thus evaporates into nothing, and Folger's only reason for remembrance lies in the fact that his youngest daughter was the mother of Benjamin Franklin.

7. NICHOLAS NOYES AND ROGER WOLCOTT

Living about the same time as Peter Folger were two rhymesters, to whom Professor Tyler gives much space in his "History of American Literature During the Colonial Period." They were Nicholas Noyes of Salem and Roger Wolcott of Windsor, Conn. The first specialized in elegies, and as to their merit it is enough to say that they were even worse than those by Captain Edward Johnson or William Morrell. The second was a sort of Mrs. Bradstreet gone crazy.³ His *magnum opus* consisted of a book rejoicing in the title of "Poetical Meditations, being the Improvement of some vacant Hours." It is one of those dreadful things that only the New England of the Seventeenth Century was capable of producing. Meditating on Man, Wolcott said this:

*For having once rebelled against his duty,
Opacous sin soon blasted all his beauty.*⁴

And of Pride this:

*Pride goes before destruction,
And haughtiness before a fall;
Whoever pores his merits on,
Shall be endangered there withal.*⁵

¹ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 20.

² See the discussion on this point by Mr. Rider in the introduction to his edition of "A Looking Glass for the Times."

³ Even Kettell, who found so much to praise in early New England verse, speaks sneeringly of Wolcott. See Kettell. Vol. I. p. 20.

⁴ Reprint of the Massachusetts Historical Society. First Series. Vol. IV. p. 12.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 7.

8. MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH

We now come to a man who deserves rather detailed consideration, if only for the fact that he was the author of one of the most popular poems in the entire history of American literature, namely, "The Day of Doom." He was the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth. He was born on October 18, 1631, and twenty years later was graduated from Harvard, "the earliest alumnus of that institution to achieve in his own day distinction as a poet."¹ His celebrated work, the full title of which is "The Day of Doom, or a Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgment. With a short discourse about Eternity," was first published in 1662. The first edition of 1800 copies sold out within the first year. Dr. Green quotes Mr. Sibley, the librarian of Harvard, as saying, "This work represented the theology of the day, and for a century, with the exception perhaps of the Bible, was more popular throughout New England than any other that can be named."² Precisely how many editions it passed through is not known. It was reprinted in New York as late as the year 1867.³

Seven years after the first publication of "The Day of Doom" Wigglesworth wrote another poem, "Meat out of the Eater; or Meditations concerning the Necessity, End and Usefulness of Afflictions unto God's Children. All tending to Prepare them *for* and Comfort them under the Cross." An authority says of it, "It proved very successful, though not so popular as the author's previous publication. Except, however, the 'Day of Doom' and the Bay Psalm Book, I know of no poetical volume published in New England previous to the Revolution, that has passed through so many editions as 'Meat out of the Eater.'"⁴

The greater part of his days Wigglesworth spent as pastor and

¹ "Michael Wigglesworth, the Earliest Poet among Harvard Graduates. With some bibliographical notes on his 'Day of Doom.'" A paper by Dr. Samuel A. Green, read on January 10, 1895, at the meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society. p. 1. For all the bibliographical data in this section I am indebted to this excellent monograph. Dr. Green, until his death in 1903, was perhaps the greatest authority in the United States on the bibliography of early New England verse writers.

² Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 1.

³ *Ibid.* p. 2.

⁴ "Memoir of the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, author of the 'Day of Doom,'" by John Ward Dean. 2nd edition. Albany, N. Y. 1871. p. 84. This is the best general study of Michael Wigglesworth in print. The appendix contains a brief autobiography, a collation of the different editions of the author's poems, and a catalogue of his library. For all biographical material in this section I am indebted to this excellent study by Mr. Dean.

physician to the church at Malden, Mass. He was a sickly man, though precisely what the nature of his ailment was has not been determined. Needless to say, he was a staunch Puritan. In fact, he was so orthodox that when he was offered the presidency of Harvard, he refused it.¹ Nevertheless, he did not go the whole way with the other fanatics. There is no record that he took part in the witchcraft persecutions. On the contrary, it is very likely that he was against them.² After the dreadful frenzy subsided somewhat, he urged a public and solemn humiliation of the people, and, moreover, argued that reparations be made to the families of those who had been burned or tortured during the mania.³

There is an incident connected with his personal life — if we may speak of such a thing in Puritan New England — that shows his basic humanity even more dramatically. The man was actually willing to, and in fact did, suffer much public reproof for the love of a woman — and a servant maid at that!

In or about the year 1679, Mr. Wigglesworth married again [twenty years after the death of his first wife.] . . . The Christian name of his wife was Martha, and her surname is supposed to have been Mudge. . . . She was then about eighteen years of age, some six years younger than his daughter; and had been his servant maid or perhaps housekeeper. His friend and former pupil, the Rev. Increase Mather, of Boston, in a letter written to him, May 8, 1679, tries to dissuade him from the marriage. Her obscure parentage, her youth, and her being no church member, "nor so much as baptised," are severally objected to. "To take one," he writes, "that was never baptised into such nearness of relation, seemeth contrary to the Gospell, especially for a minister of Christ to doe it! The like never was in New England. Nay I question whether the like hath been known in the Christian world." It seems that his relatives also did not approve of the marriage. . . . Notwithstanding the objections to this marriage, it does not appear that Mr. Wigglesworth ever regretted it. On the contrary, in a letter written less than a year after her death, he expresses the opinion that, under God, she was the means of his recovering a better state of health. Their married life lasted about eleven years, she having died September 4, 1690, aged twenty-eight. She left one son and five daughters.⁴

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 88-89.

² *Ibid.* p. 107.

³ *Ibid.* p. 108.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 88-89.

Less than two years after the death of Martha he married for the third time.

A glance at the sort of books he read will give a good idea of the type of mind he had, and "will also be of service by showing us the books read by the clergy of New England in the latter half of the Seventeenth Century, and by indicating some of the subjects which engrossed their thoughts."¹ His library was rich in works on theology and medicine. There was some classical literature in it, but of English *belles lettres* there was nothing at all. It did not even contain the poems of Mrs. Bradstreet, the pride of the New England of that day, nor of the "Silver-tongued Sylvester" of the preceding age, nor of the zealous John Bunyan, a truly fraternal spirit, nor the grand epic of Milton.²

"The Day of Doom" is a picture of what goes on in Heaven on the Judgment Day. It contains 224 eight-line stanzas. First there is a sketch of the general atmosphere of the celestial court room:

*No heart so bold, but now grows cold,
and almost dead with fear;
No eye so dry but now can cry,
and pour out many a tear.
Earth's Potentates and pow'rful States,
Captains and Men of Might,
Are quite abasht, their courage dasht,
at this most dreadful sight.*

*Mean men lament, great men do rent
their Robes and tear their hair;
They do not spare their flesh to tear
through horrible despair.
All kindreds wail; all hearts do fail;
Horror the World doth fill
With weeping eyes and loud out-cries,
yet knows not how to kill.*

*Some hide themselves in Caves and Delves,
in places under ground:
Some rashly leap into the Deep
to 'scape by being drown'd:*

¹ "Memoir of the Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, author of the 'Day of Doom,'" by John Ward Dean. 2nd edition. Albany, N. Y. 1871. p. 130.

² *Ibid.* p. 130.

*Some to the Rocks (O senseless blocks!)
And woody Mountains run,
That there they might this fearful sight,
and dreaded Presence shun.*

*In vain do they to Mountains say,
"Fall on us and us hide
From Judge's ire, more hot than Fire
for who may it abide?"
No hiding place can from his Face
sinners at all conceal,
Whose flaming Eye hid things doth spy,
and darkest things reveal.*

*The Judge draws nigh, exalted high
upon a lofty Throne,
Amidst the throng of Angels strong,
lo, Israel's Holy One!
The excellence of whose Presence
and awful Majesty,
Amazeth Nature, and every Creature
doth more than terrify.*

*The Mountains smoke, and Hills are shook,
the Earth is rent and torn,
As if she should be clear dissolv'd
or from her center borne.
The sea doth roar, forsakes the shore,
and shrinks away for fear;
The wild beasts flee into the sea,
so soon as he draws near, . . .¹*

A trumpet is blown, and all the sinners come before the Judge. He hears them, and sends them all to everlasting Hell. Then come those who died in infancy, and what goes on between them and the Judge is described in this classic passage:

*Then to the Bar all they drew near
Who died in infancy,*

¹ "The Day of Doom . . ." Reprint from the sixth edition, 1715. Boston. Charles Ewer. 1828. pp. 10-11.

*And never had or good or bad
 effected pers'nally;
 But from the womb unto the tomb
 were straightway carried,
 (Or at least ere they transgress'd)
 Why thus began to plead:*

*"If for our own transgress-ion,
 or disobedience,
 We here did stand at thy left hand,
 just were the Recompense;
 But Adam's guilt our souls hath spilt,
 his fault is charg'd upon us;
 And that alone hath overthrown
 and utterly undone us.*

*Not we, but he ate of the Tree,
 Whose fruit was interdicted;
 Yet on us all of his sad Fall
 the punishment inflicted.
 How could we sin that had not been,
 or how is his sin our,
 Without consent, which to prevent
 we never had the pow'r? . . ."*

Then answers the Judge most dread:

*"God doth such doom forbid,
 That men should die eternally
 for what they never did.
 But what you call old Adam's Fall,
 and only his Trespass,
 You call amiss to call it his,
 both his and yours it was.*

*"He was design'd of all Mankind
 to be a public Head;
 A common Root, whence all should shoot,
 and stood in all their stead.*

*He stood and fell, did ill or well,
not for himself alone,
But for you all, who now his Fall
and trespass would disown.*

*“ If he had stood, then all his brood
had been established
In God’s true love never to move,
nor once awry to tread;
Then all his Race my Father’s Grace
should have enjoy’d for ever,
And wicked Sprites by subtile sleights
could them have harmed never.*

*“ Would you have grieved to have receiv’d
through Adam so much good,
As had been your for evermore,
if he at first had stood?
Would you have said, ‘ We ne’er obey’d
nor did thy laws regard;
It ill befits with benefits,
us, Lord, to so reward?’*

*“ Since then to share in his welfare,
you could have been content,
You may with reason share in his treason,
and in the punishment.
Hence you were born in state forlorn,
with Natures so depraved;
Death was your due because that you
had thus yourselves behaved.” . . .¹*

God then pronounces judgment on the “depraved” infants:

*“ You sinners are, and such a share
as sinners, may expect;
Such you shall have, for I do save
none but mine own Elect.*

¹ “The Day of Doom . . .” Reprint from the sixth edition, 1715. Boston. Charles Ewer. 1828. pp. 64-65.

*Yet to compare your sin with their
 who liv'd a longer time,
 I do confess yours is much less,
 though ever sin's a crime.*

*"A crime it is, therefore in bliss
 you may not hope to dwell;
 But unto you I shall allow
 the easiest room in Hell."
 The glorious King thus answering,
 they cease, and plead no longer;
 Their Consciences must needs confess
 his Reasons are the stronger.*

*Thus all men's pleas the Judge with ease
 doth answer and confute,
 Until that all, both great and small,
 are silenced and mute.
 Vain hopes are cropt, all mouths are stopt,
 sinners have naught to say,
 But that 'tis just and equal most
 they should be damn'd for aye.¹*

This is the sort of poetry that was taught the New England children on their parents' knees along with the Catechism!

Beside "The Day of Doom," and "Meat out of the Eater," Wigglesworth also wrote a historical-theological tract in verse, the nature of which is sufficiently described by its title, "God's Controversy with New England, written in the Time of the Great Drought, anno 1662, by a Lover of New England's Prosperity." It was long unknown to scholars, and was first printed in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for 1871. Finally, he composed numerous shorter poems, the greater part of which were eulogies and theological reveries. The titles of the two mildest of the latter are "Death, Expected and Welcomed," and "A Farewell to the World." The first shows what Wigglesworth was capable of when his sulphurous imagination was at slumber, and his quieter mood was upon him. It follows in full:

¹ "The Day of Doom . . ." Reprint from the sixth edition, 1715. Boston. Charles Ewer. 1828. p. 66.

*Welcome, sweet REST, by me so long Desir'd,
 Who have with Sins and Griefs, so long been tir'd;
 And welcome Death, my Fathers Messenger;
 Of my Felicity the Hastener.
 Welcome Good ANGELS, who for me Distrest,
 Are come to Guard me to Eternal Rest.
 Welcome, O CHRIST, who has my Soul Redeem'd,
 Whose Favour I have more than Life esteem'd.*

*Oh! Do not now my sinful Soul forsake,
 But to thy self thy Servant Gethering take.
 Into thy Hands I recommend my Sp'rit,
 Trusting thro' Thee, Eternal Life to inherit.¹*

As to the merit of Michael Wigglesworth's *magnum opus*, "The Day of Doom," the critical world has long been unanimous. There is, however, one exception, and he is deserving of mention if only for the respect he once commanded. I refer to William Bradley Otis, of the English department of the College of the City of New York. He has handed down the opinion, and apparently has never changed his mind, that "The Day of Doom" "is a story told with broad imaginative sweep and virile power."²

9. SAMUEL WIGGLESWORTH

Michael Wigglesworth left one son, Samuel, who wrote one poem, an elegy on a friend, who died shortly after graduating from Harvard. It is entitled "A Funeral Song," and Professor Tyler thinks that it gives proof of "high poetic genius."³ The fact is that the elegy is no better than that of Urian Oakes on Thomas Shepard. The only readable lines in it are:

*Add one kind drop unto his watery tomb:
 Weep, ye relenting eyes and ears;
 See, Death himself could not refrain —
 But buried him in tears.⁴*

¹ *Ibid.* p. 88.

² "American Verse, 1625-1807," by William Bradley Otis. N. Y. 1909. p. 51.

³ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 35.

⁴ "A Funeral Song," in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register. Vol. IV. p. 90.

10. THE BAY PSALM BOOK

The two most important phenomena in the realm of poetry in the New England of the Seventeenth Century were the Bay Psalm Book and Mrs. Anne Bradstreet. The King James version of the Bible was completed in 1611, but the Puritans of the New World, like their brethren back in England, were dissatisfied with it on the ground that it departed somewhat from the letter of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. So for a time they used in their churches, as the text for the reading of the Psalms (which formed the greater part of their services outside of the sermon) Sternhold and Hopkins' ragged version of them. But soon the leading divines discovered that even this version was not an exact rendering of the original. They therefore set to work on a new and more faithful metrical translation. It was begun in 1636 and completed in 1640. It was under the supervision of three of the most eminent theological scholars of the time, the Revs. Richard Mather, Thomas Welde and John Eliot, all of whom were thoroughly acquainted with Greek and Hebrew. It was finally published in 1640, by Stephen Daye, of Cambridge, and is commonly regarded as the first book produced in America.¹

The press work was very good, but the punctuation and make-up were pretty bad. Every even page had on the top the running title PSALM, while every odd page had the title PSALME (letter spaced). The syllabification was especially bad. There were no folio numbers at the corners of the pages. The title page of the Bay Psalm Book read, "The Whole Book of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre. Whereunto is prefixed a discourse declaring not only the lawfulness, but also the necessity of the heavenly Ordinance of singing Scripture Psalmes in the Churches of God." But the work seems always to have been known as the Bay Psalm Book. The second edition was printed in a volume of 300 pages, crown octavo, in 1647, with slight changes in phraseology. Three years later a third edition was issued in a volume of 308 pages, again in crown octavo. It con-

¹ The tradition that the Bay Psalm Book was the first book printed in America is not strictly correct. Daye, the printer, a year before, in 1639, had printed the Freeman's Oath and an Almanac for New England.

For the bibliographical material I am indebted to the introduction signed "S" to "A Literal Reprint of the Bay Psalm Book, being the Earliest New England Version of the psalms and the first book printed in America." Cambridge, Printed for Charles B. Richardson. N. Y. 1862. This reprint is perhaps the most perfect facsimile copy of the first edition in existence, and the quotations made in this section are from it. My special thanks are due to the librarian of the 42nd street branch of the New York Public Library for the privilege of examining it.

tained important revisions made principally by President Dunster¹ of Harvard, who was assisted by one Richard Lyon, a man learned in Greek and Hebrew. This third edition went through at least thirty printings.²

The Bay Psalm Book was widely used in the New England churches for more than a hundred years; it was supplanted by Watts' "Psalms and Prayers" in the middle of the Eighteenth Century. It also attained popularity in England and Scotland. "In this last form, the preparation of which required the labor of about three years, the book was so favorably regarded, that it was not only the version in general use in New England, but was also preferred by many of the congregations in England, where it was used as late as the year 1717."³ In 1758 the Rev. Thomas Prince, the bibliographer, again revised it, and added to it a collection of hymns on several important devotional occasions.

The Bay Psalm Book, it is unanimously agreed by all the literary historians, was one of the most atrocious productions in the entire history of English and of American literature. It will stand forever as the most damning evidence of the dire influence of Puritanism on the æsthetic impulse. For it can hardly be maintained that the New Englanders were so devoid of a sense of beauty as to fail to see the sonorous majesty of the King James version of the Psalms. What impelled them to espouse the Bay Psalm Book was their hide-bound Calvinism, which blinded them to all sense of literary grace and power, and set up a lust within them for the most faithful literary transcription of the Bible, regardless of how uncouth and ragged it was. The Bible was the word of God, and the more close to the original a translation was the more holy it was. The wonder is that the Puritans did not perform upon the rest of the Bible what they did to the Psalms.

The following excerpts from the Bay Psalm Book are each preceded by their counterparts in the King James version. But first a reference to the preface, presumably written by the Rev. Richard Mather, wherein this confession is made:

If therefore the verses are not always so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect; let them consider that Gods Alter needs not pollishings: Ex. 20. for wee have respected rather a

¹ Cotton Mather said of the edition of 1647, "It was thought that little more of art was to be employed upon them, and for that cause they were committed unto Mr. Dunster." Quoted in "History of American Verse: 1610-1897," by James L. Onderdonk. p. 26. The edition of 1650 was enriched with some "Scripture Songs."

² Kettell. Vol. I. p. xx.

³ "S" edition of the Bay Psalm Book. p. vi.

plaine translation, then to smooth our verses with the sweetnes of any paraphrase, and soe have attended Conscience rather than Elegance, fidelity rather than poetry, in translating the hebrew words into english language, and Davids poetry into english meetre; that soe wee may sing in Sion the Lords songs of prayse according to his owne will; untill hee take us from hence, and wipe away all our teares, & bid us enter into our masters ioye to sing eternall Halleluiahs.

PSALM 18.

The King James Version

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

The Lord *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, *and* my high tower.

I will call upon the Lord, *who is worthy* to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

Then went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness *was* under his feet.

And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies.

At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail *stones* and coals of fire. [First twelve verses]

The Bay Psalm Book Version

I'll dearly love thee, Lord, my strength:
 The Lord is my rock, and my towre,
 and my deliverer, my God,
 i'll trust in him *who is* my powre,
 My shield, & my salvationes-horne,
 my high-fort; who is praise worthy,
 I on the Lord will call, so shall
 I bee kept from mine enemye.
 Deaths sorrowes mee encompassed,
 me fear'd the floods of ungodlie,
 Hells pangs beset me round about,
 the snares of death prevented mee.
 I in my streignths, cal'd on the Lord,
 and to my God cry'd: he did heare
 from his temple my voyce, my crye,
 before him came, unto his eare.
 Then th' earth shooke, & quak't, & mountaines
 roots moov'd, & were stird at his ire,
 Vp from his nostrils went a smoak,
 and from his mouth devouring fire:
 By it the coales inkindled were.
 Likewise the heavens he downe-bow'd,
 and he descended, & there was
 under his feet a gloomy cloud.
 And he on cherub rode, and flew;
 yea he flew on the wings of winde.
 His secret place hee darknes made
 his covert that him round confinde,
 Dark waters, & thick clouds of skies.
 From brightnes, that before him was,
 his thickned clouds of fire did passe away,
 hayl-stones and coales of fire did passe.

[First twelve verses]

. . .

PSALM 23.

The King James Version

The Lord *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the path of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The Bay Psalm Book Version

The Lord to mee a shepheard is,
want therefore shall not I.

Hee in the folds of tender-grasse,
doth cause mee down to lie:

To waters calme mee gently leads

Restore my soule doth hee:
he doth in paths of righteousness:
for his names sake leade mee.

Yea though in valley of deaths shade

I walk, none ill I'll feare:
because thou art with mee, thy rod,
and staffe my comfort are.

For mee a table thou hast spread,
in presence of my foes:
thou dost annoynt my head with oyle,
my cup it over-flowes.

Goodnes & mercy surely shall
all my dayes follow mee:
and in the Lords house I shall dwell
so long as dayes shall bee.

PSALM 55.

The King James Version

Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

Attend unto me, and hear me; I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

Because of the voices of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! *for then* would I fly away, and be at rest.

Lo, *then* would I wander far off, *and* remain in the wilderness. Selah.

I would hasten my escape from the windy storm *and* tempest.
[First eight verses].

The Bay Psalm Book Version

O God, doe thou give eare unto
my sypplication:
and doe not hide thy selfe away
from my petition.

Bee thou attentive unto mee,
and answer mee returne,

I in my meditation
doe make a noyse & mourne.

Beacause of th' enemies voyce, because
the wicked have opprest,
for they injustice on mee cast
and in wrath mee detest.

My heart in me is payn'd, on mee
deaths terrors fallen bee.

Trembling & feare are on mee come,
horroure hath covered mee.

Then did I say, o who to mee
 wings of a dove will give;
that I might flie away & might
 in quiet dwelling live.
 Loe, I would wander farre away,
 and in the desort rest. Selah,
 Soone would I scape from windy storme,
 from violent tempest. [First eight verses].

II. ANNE BRADSTREET

Mrs. Anne Bradstreet has been universally regarded as the most able of all the poets of Seventeenth Century New England. No less an authority than Charles Eliot Norton has said of her poems that they were "the best the first generation in New England produced."¹ She was the daughter of Governor Thomas Dudley and the wife of Governor Simon Bradstreet, both of whom were among the principal founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.² She was born in Northampton, England, in 1612 or 1613. Very little is known about her childhood. Most likely she was brought up in a strictly Puritanic atmosphere. In one of her last pieces of writing to her children, entitled "Religious Experiences," she said:

In my yovng years, about 6 or 7 as I take it, I began to make conscience of my wayes, and what I knew was sinfull, as lying, disobedience to Parents, &c. I avoided it. If at any time I was overtaken with the like evils, it was a great Trouble. I could not be at rest 'till prayer I had confest it vnto God. I was also troubled at the neglect of Private Dutyes, tho: too often tardy that way. I also found much comfort in reading the Scriptures, especially those places I thought most concerned my Condition, and as I grew to haue more vnderstanding, so the more solace I took in them.

In a long fitt of sickness w^{ch} I had on my bed I often communed with my heart, and made my supplication to the most High who sett me free from that affliction.

¹ "The Poems of Mrs. Anne Bradstreet . . ." With an introduction by Charles Eliot Norton. The Duodecimos. 1897. Edited by Frank E. Hopkins. p. xiii.

² For the biographical material I am indebted to the introduction in "The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse," edited by John Harvard Ellis. Cambridge, Mass. 1867.

But as I grew vp to bee about 14 or 15 I fovnd my heart more carnall and fitting loose from God, vanity and the follyes of youth take hold of me.

About 16, the Lord layd his hand sore upon me and smott me with the small pox. When I was in my affliction, I besought the Lord, and confessed my Pride and Vanity and he was entreated of me, and again restored me. But I rendered not to him according to y^e benefit received.

After a short time I changed my condition and was married, and came into this Covntry, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it and joined to the church at Boston.¹

Mrs. Bradstreet was married at the age of sixteen, and two years later emigrated with her husband to New England. After much moving around they finally settled near Andover, where the poet spent the rest of her days, dying in 1672, at the age of sixty. She had eight children, four sons and four daughters. Some of her descendants were William Ellery Channing, Richard H. Dana, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Wendell Phillips. Her burial place is unknown, and no portrait of her is in existence.

Mrs. Bradstreet lived in the time of Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton, Webster, Massinger, Ben Jonson, Ford, Shirley and the other luminaries of the Elizabethan era, but there is no evidence that she ever read any of them.² Very likely they were only godless persons to her, messengers of the Devil. The one monumental work of that Golden Age which brought her enjoyment was the King James Version of the Bible. She was not, however, completely ignorant of contemporary writers, but it was only the more fantastic of them who attracted her. She was very fond of Francis Quarles and George Herbert, with their puerile puns and contorted images, and especially of the French poet Du Bartas,³ whose "The Divine Weeks and Works" was translated into English by Joshua Sylvester. It is thus easy to under-

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 4-5.

² Ellis, in his introduction to his standard edition of Mrs. Bradstreet's complete works, p. 6, says that she probably read Cervantes and Shakespeare, but he offers no evidence for that statement.

³ William de Salluste du Bartas was the most celebrated French poet of his day. He lived in the years 1544-1590, and nearly all of his works were translated into English and were popular among the Puritans of the mother country and of New England. He was a Puritan in matter, if not in manner.

stand why her verses are so full of grotesque and preposterous passages. Europe was then in the grip of a dreadful literary disease, Gongorism, which originated in Italy in the Fifteenth Century with Marini, and swept westward and northward, afflicting Spain with Gongora, England with Donne and his associates, and France with Du Bartas.¹ All Mrs. Bradstreet did was to bring the plague over here, and set it going for another hundred years.

Her most ambitious poems, though also her worst, are contained in the collection entitled, in full, "The Tenth Muse, Lately sprung up in America, or Severall Poems, compiled with great variety of Wit and Learning, full of delight. Wherein especially is contained a compleat discourse and description of The Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons of the Year. Together with an Exact Epitome of the Four Monarchies, viz. The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman. Also a Dialogue between Old England and New, concerning the late troubles. With divers other pleasant and serious Poems. By a Gentle woman in those parts." The book was published anonymously in London in 1650, and was the first volume of original poems composed in New England. The foursomes of the title were in the manner common in the England of the time and for a hundred years previous.

The first of these quaternions deals with the relative merits of fire, water, earth and air. The elements speak for themselves. Fire says:

*What is my worth (both ye) and all men know,
In little time I can but little show,
But what I am, let learned Grecian say
What I can do well skil'd mechanicks may:
The benefit of all living by me finde,
All sorts of Artists, here declare your mind,
What took was ever fram'd, but by my might?*

*And though I be a servant to each man
Yet by my force, master, my masters can.
What famous Towns, to Cinders have I turn'd?
What lasting forts my kindled wrath hath burn'd?*

¹ The best and most recent study of this subject is "Gongorism and the Golden Age: A Study of Exuberance and Unrestraint in the Arts," by Elisha K. Kane. The University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill. N. C. 1928.

*The stately Seats of mighty Kings by me
In confused heaps, of ashes may you see.¹*

Earth has its swing, and then water comes in thus :

*Earth thou hast not more countrys vales & mounds
Then I have fountains, rivers lakes and ponds. . . .
But I should go beyond thee in my boats,
If I should name more seas then thou hast coasts.
And be thy mountains ne'er so high and steep,
I soon can match them with my seas as deep.²*

Air, the last of the elements to take the floor and the one which seems to have the best of the argument, has this to say :

*Nay what are words which do reveal the mind,
Speak who or what they will they are but wind.
Your drums your trumpets & your organs sound,
What is't but forced air which doth rebound,
And such are ecchoes and report of th' gun
That tells afar the exploit which it hath done.
Your Songs and pleasant tunes they are the same,
And so's the notes which Nightingales do frame.³*

All the other quaternions are written in the same jingling, dreadful manner. What is perhaps the most ambitious of them, the Four Monarchies, is nothing more than a rhymed chronicle of ancient history from Nimrod to Tarquinius Superbus, modeled upon Sir Walter Raleigh's "History of the World." There remains the quaternion dealing with the Four Ages of Man: childhood, youth, middle age and old age. Here the poet has a little more scope for the play of her fancy. The first to take the floor is childhood. Is it a care-free, abandoned, glorious time in the life of man? Not according to Mrs. Bradstreet, who has it speak in this manner :

*Ah me! conceived in sin and born with sorrow.
A nothing, here and gone to morrow,
Whose mean beginning blushing can't reveal,
But night and darkness must with shame conceal.*

¹ Ellis edition of the complete works of Mrs. Bradstreet. pp. 104-107.

² *Ibid.* p. 116.

³ *Ibid.* p. 119.

*When infancy was past, my childishness
 Did act all folly that it could express,
 My silliness did only take delight
 In that which riper age did scorn and slight.*

It does, to be sure, avoid the troubles of mature age.

*But yet let me relate before I go
 The sins and dangers I am subject to,
 Stained from birth with Adams sinfull fact,
 Thence I began to sin as soon as act:
 A perverse will, a love to what's forbid,
 A serpents sling in pleasing face lay hid:
 A lying tongue as soon as it could speak,
 And fifth Commandment do daily break.*

*I've done; unto my elders I give way,
 For tis but little that a child can say.¹*

The tale of youth is hardly less lugubrious:

*To many my diseases to recite,
 That wonder tis, I yet behold the light,
 That yet my bed in darkness is not made,
 And I in black oblivions Den now laid
 Of aches full my bones, of woe my heart,
 Clapt in that prison, never thence to start,
 Thus I have said, and what I've been you see
 Childhood and Youth are vain ye vanity.²*

In addition to the four quaternions Mrs. Bradstreet also wrote a great many fugitive pieces. Many of them Mr. Ellis in his standard edition of her works has included under the general heading of "Religious Experiences and Occasional Verses." Two samples of them follow:

*Deliverance from a fitt of ffainting.
 Worthy art Thou, O Lord of praise!
 But ah! it's not in me;
 My sinking heart I pray thee raise,
 So shall I give it Thee.*

¹ Ellis edition of the complete works of Mrs. Bradstreet. pp. 149-152.

² *Ibid.* p. 156.

*My life as Spider's webb's cutt off,
Thus fainting have I said,
And living man no more shall see,
But bee in silence layd.*

*My feblee Spirit thou didst reviuē,
My doubting thou didst chide,
And tho: as dead mad'st me aliue,
I here a while might 'bide.*

*Why should I liue but to thy Praise?
My life is hid with Thee;
O Lord, no longer bee my Dayes
Then I may frvitfull bee.¹*

This is entitled "Joy in God."

*My soul, rejoyce thou in thy God,
Boast of him all the Day,
Walk in his Law and kisse his Rod,
Cleaue close to him alway.*

*What tho: thy outward Man decay,
Thy inward shall waxe strong;
Thy body vile it shall be changed,
And glorious made ere-long.*

*With Angels-wings thy Soul shall moumt
To Blisse vnseen by Eye,
And drink at vnexhausted fount
Of Joy vnto Eternity.*

*Thy teares shall All bee dryed vp,
Thy Sorrowes all shall flye;
Thy Sinns shall ne'er bee summoned vp,
Nor come in memory.*

*Then shall I know what thou hast done
For me, vnworthy me,
And praise thee shall ev'n as I ought,
ffor wonders that I see.*

¹ *Ibid.* p. 15.

*Base World, I trample on thy face,
 Thy Glory I despise,
 No gain I find in ought below,
 For God hath made me wif[s?].e.*

*Come, Jesus, quickly, Blessed Lord,
 Thy face when shall I see?
 O let me count each hour a Day
 'Till I dissolved bee.¹*

Mrs. Bradstreet was a faithful wife, a good mother and a devoted daughter, yet her verses to her parents, children and husband, with one exception to be noted later, are pretty cold, to say the least. Here, for example, is a poem she wrote about her husband while he was in England on public business:

In my Solitary houres in my dear husband his Absence.

*O Lord, thou hear'st my dayly moan,
 And see'st my dropping teares:
 My Troubles All are Thee before,
 My longings and my feares.*

*Tho; husband dear bee from me gone,
 Whom I doe loue so well:
 I haue a more beloued one
 Whose comforts far excell.
 O stay my heart on thee, my God,
 Uphold my fainting Soul!
 And, when I know not what to doe,
 I'll on thy mercyes roll.
 My weakness, thou do'st know full well,
 Of Body and of mind.
 I, in this world, no comfort haue,
 But what from thee I find.²*

She wrote an elegy on her father, which, though not as stark in its Puritanism as the preceding, was surely frigid enough. So was the one on her mother. Six lines from it follow:

¹ Ellis edition of the complete works of Mrs. Bradstreet. p. 19.

² *Ibid.* pp. 35-36.

*A worthy Matron of unspotted life,
A loving Mother and obedient wife,
A friendly Neighbor, pitiful to poor,
Whom oft she fed, and clothed with her store;
To Servants wisely aweful, but yet kind,
And as they did, so they reward did find.¹*

Of her children the most loving things she could say were these:

*I Had eight birds hatcht in one nest,
Four Cocks there were, and Hens the rest,
I nurst them with pain and care,
Nor cost, nor labour did I spare,
Till at the last they felt their wing.
Mounted the Trees and learned to sing;
Chief of the brood then took his flight,
To Regions far, and left me quite:
My second bird did take her flight,
And with her mate flew out of sight: . . .²*

Of the purely religious poems, "The Flesh and the Spirit," and "Longing for Heaven" are the most representative. The latter she wrote only a few months before her death. If one were minded to measure infinitesimals, one might say there are some more or less moving lines in it.

*As weary pilgrim now at rest
Hugs with delight his silent nest;
His wasted limbs now lye full soft,
That miry steps have trodden oft;
Blesses himself to think vpon
His dangers past, and travails done;*

*A pilgrim I, on earth perplexed,
With sins and cares and sorrows vexed,
By age and pains brought to decay,
And my clay house mouldering away,
Oh, how I long to be at rest
And soar on high among the blest.³*

¹ *Ibid.* p. 369.

² *Ibid.* p. 400.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 42-43. "Longing for Heaven" first appeared in the Ellis edition. Apparently it did not receive publication in the author's lifetime.

"Contemplations," a rather longish poem, is a series of poetic reminiscences. Most of them are of this low order:

*Some time now past in the Autumnal Tide,
When Phoebus wanted but one hour to bed,
The trees all richly clad, yet void of pride,
Where gilded o're by his rich golden head.
Their leaves of red, of yellow, mixed hew,
Rapt were my senses at this delectable view.*

*I wist not what to wish, yet sure thought I,
If so much excellence abide below:
How excellent is he that dwells on high?
Whose power and beauty by his works we know.
Sure he is goodness, wisdom, glory, light,
That hath this under world so richly dight:
More Heaven then Earth was here no winter
E no night.¹*

But for once Mrs. Bradstreet forgot God and Heaven and Hell, and wrote a piece that is redolent with genuine human emotion, and achieves the status of somewhat respectable poetry.

*Under the cooling shadow of a stately Elm
Close sate I by a goodly Rivers side,
Where gliding streames the Rocks did overwhelm;
A lonely place with pleasures dignified.
I once that lov'd the shady woods so well,
Now thought the rivers did the trees excel,
And if the sun would ever shine, there would I dwell.²*

Only one other time did she write a whole stanza — this time it was a whole poem — without a reference to God or the angels. It was another emotional outburst inspired by her husband. There is room for speculation of an obvious sort in the fact that it was not published till some time after her death.

To my Dear and loving Husband
*If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were lov'd by wife, then thee;*

¹ Ellis edition of the complete works of Mrs. Bradstreet, p. 371.

² *Ibid.* p. 377.

*If ever wife was happy in a man,
 Compare with me ye women if you can.
 I prize thy love more than whole Mines of gold,
 Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
 My love is such that Rivers cannot quench,
 Nor ought but love from thee, give recompence.
 Thy love is such I can no way repay,
 The heavens reward thee manifold I pray.
 Then while we live, in love lets so persevere,
 That when we live no more, we may live ever.¹*

Beside poetry Mrs. Bradstreet also wrote some prose: "Religious Experiences," a brief autobiographical sketch already referred to, and a series of aphorisms which she called "Meditations Divine and Moral." Professor Tyler gives the latter high praise and sees "strength of thought"² in them. This is perhaps rating them a little too high, as the following samples show:

Many can speak well, but few can do well. We are better scholars in the Theory then the practique part, but he is a true Christian that is proficient in both. . . .

The finest bread hath the least bran; the purest hony, the least wax; and the sincerest Christian, the least self love. . . .

If we had no winter the spring would not be pleasant: if we did not sometimes tast of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome. . . .

Sore laborers have sore hard hands, and old sinners have brawny consciences. . . .³

In her lifetime Mrs. Bradstreet received praise usually reserved only for the masters. Cotton Mather's judgment of her is well known. He said that her works would be "a monument to her memory beyond the stateliest marble." The intellectual class of the day agreed with him, as we have seen in the discussion of the prefatory poems written in her honor by John Rogers, president of Harvard, and the Rev. John Norton, one of the most prominent ecclesiastics of the day. But ever since Griswold's "The Poets and Poetry of America" and "The

¹ *Ibid.* p. 394. Strangely enough, neither Professor Tyler nor Professor Wendell makes any mention of this poem, obviously Mrs. Bradstreet's best.

² Tyler. Vol. I. p. 280.

³ Ellis edition of Bradstreet. pp. 48-50.

Female Poets of America," both published in the fifth decade of the last century, the critical estimate of her work has become more sober, so that today there is no reputable literary historian who does more than apologize for her. Even so conservative a work as "The Cambridge History of American Literature" finds it impossible to go any further. "Anne Bradstreet," says Professor Samuel Marion Tucker, author of the chapter on "The Beginnings of Verse. 1610-1808," "was not a poet. She was a winsome personality in an unlovely age. That she should have written verse at all was phenomenal, but that it should have been poor verse was inevitable."¹

Anne Bradstreet was really no more than a theologian with a capacity for the composition of jingles. She had no sense of rhythm to speak of. Genuine poetic instinct and real poetic imagination were alien to her. Trees, birds, grass and the sky did not make her happy; they merely intensified the wish within her to be rid of this life and to enter Heaven. The thought of her husband in a far-away land did not make her ache with the pangs of love; it only aroused in her the feeling that though she loved him, she loved God infinitely more.

12. CONCLUDING REMARKS ON EARLY NEW ENGLAND POETRY

Looking back on the poetic output of New England in the Seventeenth Century, and examining its æsthetic content, one can do little more than shudder. The fact was that there was no poetry. I have examined everything that is readable, and have labeled this verse better than the other. But it was not to point out any genuine æsthetic merit in anything; it was only to differentiate between degrees of badness. All the verse written at the time was dreadful; only some of it was a hair's breadth less dreadful than the rest.

The reason for all this is not far to seek. Indeed, the Puritans went to great pains to point it out themselves. The Rev. Michael Wigglesworth bespoke the attitude of them all when he prefaced his "The Day of Doom" with these lines:

¹ "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. p. 154. For a diametrically opposite opinion see "Literary Culture in Early New England. 1620-1730," by Thomas Goddard Wright. The Yale University Press, 1920. p. 95.

*O Dearest Dread, most glorious King,
 I'll of thy justest Judgments sing:
 Do thy my head and heart inspire,
 To sing aright as I desire.
 Thee, thee alone I'll invoke,
 For I do much abominate
 To call the Muses to mine aid:
 Which is th' Unchristian use and trade
 Of some that Christians would be thought,
 And yet they worship worse than nought.
 Oh! What a deal of Blasphemy,
 And Heathenish Impiety,
 In Christian Poets may be found,
 Where Heathen gods with praise are Crown'd,
 They make Jehovah to stand by,
 Till Juno, Venus, Mercury,
 With frowning Mars, and thundering Jove
 Rule Earth below and Heaven above.
 But I have learned to pray to none,
 Save unto God in Christ alone,
 Nor will I laud, no not in jest,
 That which I know God doth detest.
 I reckon it a damning evil,
 To give Gods Praises to the Devil.
 Thou, Christ, are he to whom I pray,
 Thy Glory fain I would display.
 Oh! guide me by thy sacred Sprite
 So to indite, and so to write,
 That I thine holy Name may praise,
 And teach the sons of men thy ways.¹*

The Puritans were interested in the Word and that alone. They abhorred whatever smelled of the fine arts. "To call the *Muses* to mine aid . . . is th' Unchristian use and trade." That is why they went to so much trouble to extirpate every bit of beauty in the King James Version of the Psalms. Their own version, in the Bay Psalm Book, was atrocious poetically, and as the preface to it shows, they knew it, but they were willing to let all beauty go to the dogs if only thereby they could come closer to what they thought was the Word

¹ "The Day of Doom . . ." Reprint from the sixth edition, 1715. Boston. 1828. p. 9.

of God. Poetry to them was not a vehicle whereby to express the soarings of the heart; it was merely a pleasing way of giving expression to their Hell theology. Of the beauties of nature they were completely oblivious. If they spoke of nature at all, it was to point out the wrath of God. The infinite wonder of their new home did not touch them at all. What Professor Charles Eliot Norton says of Mrs. Bradstreet's poetry can be said with equal and even more truth of every other poet of the time: "It is, indeed, a striking fact in regard to her poetry, and a criticism upon it as well, that in it all there is scarcely a reference to New England, and no word from which we might gather that it had been written in the New World at a time so difficult, so interesting, so strange to these new-comers from the Old."¹ Why, indeed, should a new world interest them? Like the Old, it was no more than a vestibule to the glorious life hereafter.

The Puritans were in possession of everything necessary for the creation of living poetry, with the exception of the most important thing of all — a free soul. That their Calvinism crushed. As Professor Norton says, there was abundance of religious feeling, abundance of domestic sentiment, and a certain aptitude for the composition of verses among them, "but in the whole mass there is scarcely one line instinct with imagination, and few that show a play of fancy or sustained liveliness of humor."²

¹ "The Poems of Mrs. Anne Bradstreet . . ." With an introduction by Charles Eliot Norton. The Duodecimos. Boston. 1897. pp. x-xi.

² *Ibid.* p. xi. For a similar opinion see "The Poets and Poetry of America . . .," by Wilmot Rufus Griswold. Phila. 1850. Tenth edition. p. xvii.

CHAPTER IX (Part Two)

New England

Early New England Verse and Prose

B. THE PROSE WRITERS

CHAPTER IX (Part Two)

Early New England Verse and Prose

I. NATHANIEL WARD

The prose of New England in the Seventeenth Century was vastly better than its verse. The persons writing it were interested not in imitating anybody, as the so-called poets were, but in putting into print what was in their minds. At least one of them, Roger Williams, will live as long as American literature lives.

Perhaps the earliest of the New England prose writers — excepting the annalists, of course, — was the Rev. Nathaniel Ward, whom Mr. Llewelyn Powys has called, “the single authentic ‘worthy,’ to use that word with all its old-world implications, that America has produced. . . . He was an exquisite, a fantastic, a man with ‘velvet ears,’ disguised under the sober garb of a ‘painful’ Puritan minister. . . . He could not so much as pen a sentence without some unpuritanical whimsey slipping on to his paper.”¹ And Professor Parrington has said of his celebrated book, “The Simple Cöbler of Aggawam,” that it “is certainly the brightest bit of Renaissance English penned in America — an Elizabethan clipped garden set down in a wilderness of theology.”² It was a fact that the book caused quite a commotion in the mother country, and that later on it strongly attracted the English poet Southey.³

Ward was born sometime between 1578 and 1580. He was the son of a minister, and in 1596 entered “that nursery of the Puritans,”⁴ Emmanuel College, Cambridge. There he took his A.B. and A.M. Originally he prepared himself for the law, and not for the ministry, and he practised the former profession long before he became a clergyman. He traveled on the Continent and there he saw, “the best part

¹ “An American Worthy,” by Llewelyn Powys. *Phantasmus*. Pittsburgh. July-August. 1924. p. 223.

² Parrington. Vol. I. p. 76.

³ “A Memoir of the Rev. Nathaniel Ward, A.M., author of *The Simple Cöbler of Agawam* in America, with notices of his Family,” by John Ward Deane. Albany, N. Y. 1868. p. 2. For most of the biographical material I am indebted to this excellent book.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 20.

of twenty Christian kings and princes.”¹ He visited Heidelberg, and there heard the celebrated theological scholar, David Pareus, and was so moved by him that he decided to become a minister. He was probably ordained in 1618, and began to preach at once. He showed Puritan tendencies from the first, and in the usual course of events was driven out of the country by Archbishop Laud.

In 1634 he came to New England, and was given the pastorate at Ipswich. Before the end of two years, he was released from his ministerial duties because of ill health. But by that time he had achieved a reputation as a man of parts, and as a result was appointed on a committee to prepare a code of laws for Massachusetts. Until then all power rested with the magistrates, and for protection the people had been demanding a written code. The code, known as “The Body of Liberties,” was mainly prepared by Ward. It was revised and finally adopted in December, 1641. It was the first code of laws established in New England. At the time of its ratification nineteen copies were sent to the constituent towns, but in the ensuing years all of them were lost. It was only in 1810 that Dr. Francis C. Gray discovered one of these copies, and had it published, under his own editorship, in the twenty-eighth volume of the Massachusetts Historical Collections. In his preface to the reprint Dr. Gray says: “‘The Body of Liberties’ exhibits throughout the hand of the practiced lawyer, familiar with the principles and securities of English liberties; and although it retains some strong traces of the times, it is, in the main, far in advance of them, and in several respects in advance of the Common Law of England at this day. It shows that our ancestors, instead of deducing their laws from the books of Moses, established at the outset a code of fundamental principles, which, taken as a whole, for wisdom, equity, and adaptation to the wants of their community challenge a comparison with any similar production, from Magna Charta itself to the latest Bill of Rights, that has been put forth in Europe or America.”²

Mr. Deane, in his memoir of Ward, points out another excellent feature of “The Body of Liberties.” “It was provided,” he says,

¹ “The Simple Cowler of Aggawam in America,” by the Rev. Nathaniel Ward. Edited by David Pulsifer. Boston. 1843. p. 46.

² Quoted in the Deane memoir of Ward, pp. 63-64. It is rather strange that James Truslow Adams makes no mention of this point, nor of Ward in any other way, in his study of colonial New England, and the same, curiously enough, is true of the Beards in “The Rise of American Civilization.” Professor Tyler devotes nearly twelve pages to a discussion of “The Simple Cowler of Aggawam,” but says not a word about “The Body of Liberties.”

"that, at every general court for three years following, this code should be audibly read and deliberately weighed, and that such of the laws as were not altered or repealed should 'stand so ratified; that no man shall infringe them without due punishment.' For the omission to read them, the Governor, Deputy-Governor, and every magistrate and deputy were to be fined."¹

Ward probably began writing "The Simple Cobler" in 1645, and completed it the year following. He sent it to England, and had it published there in January, 1646 or 1647. It first appeared under the thinly disguised pseudonym of Theodore de la Guard, but it was very likely that he made no secret of its real authorship to his circle of friends. It appealed to the English public immediately, and had the good fortune of going through four editions in its first year.² It is probable that Ward returned to England at about the same time that he sent over "The Simple Cobler." He was thus a resident of New England for only twelve years, but he always spoke highly of the country and its people. In England he wrote a great many other books, but they all deal with purely English ecclesiastical and political matters, and need not concern us here.³ He probably died in 1653.

The full title of Ward's most celebrated book is "The Simple Cobler of Agavvam in America. Willing to help 'mend his Native Country, lamentably tattered, both in the upper-leather and sole, with all the honest stiches he can take. And as willing never to be paid for his work, by Old English wonted pay. *It is his trade to patch all the year long, gratis.* Therefore I pray Gentlemen keep your purses, by *Theodore de la Guard.* London. Printed by *J. D. & R. I. for Stephen Bowtell*, at the signe of the Bible in Popes Head-Alley, 1647." The book begins with a violent protest against religious toleration, goes on to a blast against the corrupt women's fashions of the time, and ends with a discussion of the political state of England. Ward was no political or social theorist as was Roger Williams, and his ideas have no intrinsic value. It is the vigor of his language that attracts. For religious toleration, as has been said, he had no use whatever.

If the devill might have his free option, he would ask nothing else, but liberty to enfranchise all false Religions, and to embondage the true; nor should he need: it is much to be feared,

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 65.

² All the known bibliographical data about "The Simple Cobler" are given in *Ibid.* p. 91 ff.

³ A complete list of these English books is given in *Ibid.* p. 92 ff.

that laxe Tolerations upon State pretences and planting necessities, will be the next subtle Stratagem he will spread, to distate the Truth of God and supplant the peace of the Churches. Toleration in things tolerable, exquisitively drawn out by the lines of Scripture, and pensill of the Spirit, are the sacred favours of the Truth, the due latitudes of Love, the faire Compartments of Christian fraternity: but irregular dispensations, dealt forth by the facilities of men, are the frontiers of error, the redoubts of Schisme, the perillous irritaments of carnall and spirituall enmity. . . . Tolerations of divers Religions, or of one Religion in segregant shapes: He that willingly assents to the last, if he examines his heart by day-light, his conscience will tell him, he is either an Atheist, or an Heretique, or an Hypocrite, or at best a captive to some lust: Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world. True Religion is *Ignis probationis*, which doth *congregare homogenea* & *segregare heterogenea*.¹

After which Ward grows really angry:

How all Religions should enjoy their Liberty, Justice its due regularity, Civill cohabitation morall honesty, in one and the same Jurisdiction, is beyond the Artique of my comprehension. If the whole conclave of Hell can so compromise, exadverse, and diametricall contradictions, as to compolitize such a multimonstrous maufrey of heteroclytes and quicquidlibets quietly; I trust I may say with all humbel reverence, they do more than the Senate of Heaven. My *modus loquendi* pardoned; I intirely wish much welfare and more wisdom to that Plantation.²

Though a rabid theocrat, Ward, strangely enough, was also in favor of civil liberties. How he reconciled the two beliefs remains a mystery. Anyway, here is what he had to say about the political rights of man:

Civill Liberties and Proprieties admeasured, to every man to his true suum, are the *prima pura principia*, *propria quarto modo*, the *sine quibus* of human States without which men are but women. Peoples prostrations of these things when they may lawfully helpe it, are profane prostitutions; ignorant Ideatismes, under naturall

¹ David Pulsifer edition of "The Simple Cobler." Boston. 1843. pp. 4-5.

² *Ibid.* pp. 22-23.

noddaries; and just it is that such as undersell them, should not re-inherit them in haste, though they seek it carefully with teares. And such usurpations by Rulers, are the unnaturalizings of nature, disfranchisements of Freedome, the Neronian nyllifyings of Kingdomes: yea, I beleeeve the Devill himselfe would turne Round-head, rather than suffer these Columnnes of Commonwealths to be slighted: as he is a creature, he feares decreation; as an Angell, dehominations; as a Prince, dis-common-wealthings; as finite, these pen-infinite insolencies, which are the most finite Infinites of misery to men on this side the worlds dissolution: therefore it is that with Gods leave, he hath sounded an alarm to all *susque deque*s, pellmels, one and alls, now harrassing sundry parts of Christendome.¹

A good portion of "The Simple Cobler" is devoted to an attack on the fashions of women in New England. This topic, indeed, seems to have been Ward's favorite one, and in the discussion of it he shows his real powers as a prose writer. He introduces the subject in this manner:

Should I not keepe promise in speaking a little to Womens fashions, they would take it unkindly. I was loath to pester better matter with such stuffe; I rather thought it meet to let them stand by themselves, like the *Quæ Genus* in the Grammar, being Deficients, or Redundants, not to be brought under any Rule: I shall therefore make bold for this once, to borrow a little of their loose tongued Liberty, and mispend a word or two upon their long-wasted but short-skirted patience: a little use of my stirrup will do no harme.²

Then he plunges right in:

It is known more than enough, that I am neither Nigard, nor Cinick, to the true bravery of the true Gentry: if any man mislikes a bully among drossocks more than I, let him take her for his labour: I honour the woman that can honour her selfe with her attire: a good Text alwayes deserves a fair Margent: I am not much offended if I see a trimme, far trimmer than she that wears it: in a word, whatever Christianity or Civility will allow,

¹ *Ibid.* p. 51.

² *Ibid.* p. 25.

I can afford with *London* measure: but when I hear a nugiperous Gentledame inquire what dresse the Queen is in this week: what the nudiustertian fashion of the Court; I meane the very newest: with egge to be in it in all haste, what ever it be; I look at her as the very gizzard of a trifle, the product of a quarter of a cypher, the epitome of nothing, fitter to be kicked if she were of a kickable substance, then either honour'd or humor'd.¹

Every now and then, apparently unsatisfied with his prose arrows of hate, he goes off into verse, as witness this strophe:

*These whimm' Crown'd shees, these fashion-fansying wits,
Are empty thin brain'd shells, and fiddling Kits.*²

And this one:

*The world is full of care, much like unto a bubble;
Women and care, and care and women, and women and care and
trouble.*³

"The Simple Cobler," indeed, is full of snatches of verse. Some of them, as shown above, are interspersed within the prose, while others stand by themselves. Here is one of the latter kind:

*No King can King it right,
Nor rightly sway his Rod;
Who truly loves not Christ,
And truly fears not God.*

*No earthly man can be
True Subject to this State;
Who makes the Pope his Christ,
An Heretique his Mate.*

*There Peace will goe to War,
And Silence make a noise:
Where upper things will not
With nether equipose.*

¹ David Pulsifer edition of "The Simple Cobler." Boston, 1843. p. 26.

² *Ibid.* p. 27.

³ *Ibid.* p. 27.

*The upper world shall Rule,
While Stars will run their race:
The nether world obey,
While People keep their place.¹*

Much has been made of the directness of Ward's attacks on what he considered to be the evils of the time. Professor Tyler thinks that "The Simple Cbler" stands out for its courage and fearlessness.² The fact was, as has been shown in the discussions of Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard, John Cotton and the other early New England divines, that all the early Puritan thinkers were fearless in their expression. Some of them, as, for example, Hooker and Shepard, were even more violent in their onslaughts than Ward. What is more, they were less affected in their speech and more intelligible. He is occasionally readable and somewhat amusing at times, but only as eccentrics always are. His ideas deserve consideration only because they represent the general level of thinking in his day. He surely did not rise above them, as Roger Williams did. Roy F. Dibble has said of him that he "lives as the first American satirist."³ This is historically incorrect. Thomas Morton of may-pole fame was a far more bitter and certainly more civilized satirist. His "New England Canaan" was first published in Amsterdam in 1637, and Ward's "The Simple Cbler" was not published before 1646 at the earliest.

"The Simple Cbler," for some unaccountable reason, has been praised beyond bounds by nearly all of the literary historians.⁴ Tyler showed them the way when he said of it, "One would have to search long among the rubbish of books thrown forth to the public during those hot and teeming days, to find one more authentically representing the stir, the earnestness, the intolerance, the hope, and the wrath of the times than does this book."⁵ It seems to me that the books by Hooker and Shepard and John Cotton are at least as good indicia of what was going on. In the field of verse, the Bay Psalm Book and "The Day of Doom" surely give a better insight into the soul of the Puritan than does "The Simple Cbler." The latter is valuable

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 85-86.

² Tyler. Vol. I. pp. 239-240.

³ "The Simple Cobbler of Agawam," by Roy F. Dibble. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. Durham, N. C. Vol. XIX. April 1920. p. 170.

⁴ Mr. Charles F. Richardson in his "American Literature, 1607-1885," Vol. I, p. 101, calls Ward "a New England Sartor Resartus." This is an obvious exaggeration.

⁵ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 230.

for the same reason that the books just mentioned are valuable, and for nothing more. Its eccentricities of language add nothing to it save more unintelligibility than it would otherwise have had.

2. ROGER WILLIAMS

Professor Parrington has rightly said of Roger Williams that of all the socio-political theorists in colonial New England he was "the one original thinker,"¹ and that his writings on politics were "the richest contribution of Puritanism to American political thinking."² The Beards have called him "a pioneer among the bold thinkers of the world in proclaiming religious toleration on principles rather than on expediency."³

As is the case with so many of the other early New England leaders, very little is known about Williams' life before his arrival on this continent.⁴ In fact, it was not till 1889, due to the researches of Dr. Reuben A. Guild, librarian of Brown University, that it was first determined that he was born near Gwinear, Cornwall, England, on December 21, 1602. His parents were probably well-to-do, but he was not in good favor with them, on account of his early Separatist opinions. In due time he was driven out of England, and came to this country in 1630.

He was at once called to be teacher at the First Church in Boston, but declined, "because I durst not officiate to an unseparated people, as upon examination and conference I found them to be."⁵ He was here only a few weeks when he launched a terrific attack upon the régime of Governor Winthrop, whom he considered an enemy of ecclesiastical and political liberty. He demanded "that the members of the Boston church should publicly express their repentance, for the sin of having communed with the Church of England during their residence there. Next, he argued that the magistrates had no right to punish infractions of the first table of the decalogue. Inasmuch as the first table was then understood to forbid idolatry, blasphemy and Sabbath breaking, it cannot be wondered that these opinions were not

¹ Parrington, Vol. I. p. 63.

² *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 66.

³ "The Rise of American Civilization." Vol. I. p. 56.

⁴ For the greater part of the biographical material in this section I am indebted to "Roger Williams. A Study of the Life, Times and Character of a Political Pioneer," by Edmund S. Carpenter. N. Y. 1909.

⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 28.

graciously received."¹ Williams' stay in Boston was therefore very short.

The next two years he spent at Plymouth, where he was admitted to the church, made a teacher, and gained the admiration of Governor Bradford. This is about all that is known of his stay with the Pilgrims. He then moved to Salem, where he wished to accept a pastorate. On his request, the Plymouth church gave him his dismissal papers, and wrote to the prospective Salem church of his qualifications, adding, however, that it was doing so "with some caution to them concerning him and what care they ought to have of him."² The Salem church accepted him just the same.

But he was no sooner installed than he raised a storm over the custom of the neighborhood churches of meeting in rotation at some church and discussing common ecclesiastical affairs. He feared that it might give rise to a presbytery, "to the prejudice of the church's liberty."³ But this was not all. In December, 1633, he forwarded to the Governor and his Council a treatise "wherein, among other things, he disputed their right to the lands they possessed here, and concluded that, claiming by the King's grant, they could have no title, nor otherwise, except they compounded with the natives." Moreover, he charged the King and others "with blaspheming, for calling Europe Christendom, or the Christian World." He also attacked King James and charged him with having told "a solemn public lie, because, in his patent, he blessed God that he was the first Christian prince that had discovered this land."⁴ A storm ensued. He was called to explain himself before the Governor, and for the only time in his life he retracted.

For a short time thereafter things went along peaceably. But before long Williams resumed his attacks on the patent and on the magistrates, and again he was called before the Governor, in April, 1635. This time he stood his ground, and as a result was thrown out of both the Salem and Boston churches. So he renounced communion with all the churches in the Colony, and established a service of preaching in his own home in Salem. He admitted to the services only those who practised his principles. "Even his wife, who persisted in attending the services of the church, was excluded from these secret meetings."⁵

¹ *Ibid.* p. 30.

² Bradford's "History of Plymouth." p. 370.

³ Winthrop's "History of New England." Vol. I. p. 139.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 145.

⁵ Carpenter biography. p. 106.

The court which had expelled him from the Salem and Boston churches ordered him to leave the Massachusetts Bay Colony within six weeks of its decision. Williams tarried about Salem over the time limit, and the authorities tried to deport him to England. But before they were able to get hold of him, he escaped to Rhode Island, and there set up the town of Providence.¹ Precisely why he was hounded out of Massachusetts has been a problem to historians ever since the event. Dr. Carpenter thinks that "a careful survey of all the circumstances and a study of the political conditions at the time, can but assure the student that it was the political, far more than the religious, aspect of the case which created the chief alarm among the colonists, and precipitated their final rupture with Williams."²

Williams loved controversy and forensic argument, but it was not until he came to Providence that he set any of his ideas on paper.³ There he put into practice the principle of liberty of conscience, and his dealings with the Indians were on the same humanitarian level as those of Daniel Gookin and the Rev. John Eliot. Throughout he was on the best of terms with Governors Winthrop and Bradford, in spite of all that had happened to him in their Colonies. There was, however, one blemish in his character, and that was his mean-spirited squabble with George Fox, the Quaker. "In this he not only displayed an acrimonious spirit, in the use of harsh and abusive terms and epithets, but showed forth such a testimony of uncharitableness, savoring of intolerance, as to belie much which he had argued in former years, to the end that none should be disturbed for conscience."⁴ The Quakers, who had been driven from Massachusetts, tried in vain to have Williams become interested in their cause. In 1671 George Fox came over from England to their society in Aquidneck. He held a number of big meetings of the Friends in the barns of the neighborhood, and so aroused much talk about them.

Williams, who was now over seventy, kept to the side lines for a time, but of a sudden he challenged Fox, or "all comers," to a doctrinal debate. Fox, for some reason or other, was not notified of the

¹ Williams was not the first settler of Narragansett Bay, as is generally supposed. William Blackstone had located there sometime before. See "The Founding of New England." Adams. p. 184.

² Carpenter biography. p. 115. Whatever the cause of his banishment Williams aroused very little public favor or even interest. The storm was only among the magistrates. See "The Founding of New England." Adams. p. 165.

³ Carpenter biography. p. 112.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 231.

challenge, and departed for England. So other Quakers took his place, and the debate was arranged. "Upon the day previous to that fixed for the opening of the debate, Mr. Williams left Providence in a rowboat, and performed the remarkable feat of rowing the entire distance to Newport, fully thirty miles, that he might be present at the time appointed."¹ The discussion lasted four days—three in Newport, and one in Providence. Later Williams published a rather mean-spirited attack on Fox, entitled, "George Fox Digg'd out of his Burrowes."

There is evidence that he had studied the classics, but he never alluded to Homer or Plato. He was a personal friend of Milton, but he probably never read a line of his, and neither, it appears, did he ever read any of Shakespeare.² The precise date of his death is not known, but it was probably in 1683.

Undoubtedly the most important, and at the same time the most representative, of his writings were those relating to his controversy with the Rev. John Cotton concerning religious toleration. A prisoner in Newgate, confined because of his religious beliefs, had written a small tract arguing against persecution for differences in matters of creed. A copy of this was sent to John Cotton, who wrote a reply, in which he maintained that persecution of the unorthodox was just. Williams answered Cotton in his celebrated tract entitled, "The Bloody Tenent, of Persecution, for cause of Conscience, discussed, in A Conference between Truth and Peace. Who, In all tender Affection, present to the High Court of Parliament, (as the Result of Discourse) these (amongst other Passages) of highest consideration." It was first printed in London in 1644. In the first year of its publication it attained the honor of two editions and that of martyrdom in a Presbyterian *auto-da-fé*.

Williams finished the book in England during his visit there in 1642–1644 to obtain a charter for Rhode Island. At the same time he also wrote "A Key into the Languages of America," "Mr. Cotton's Letter Examined and Answered" (a reply to a letter which Cotton had just then published in London, justifying Williams' banishment from Massachusetts), and "Queries of Highest Consideration" (a few liberal notes regarding the current conflict over what the character of the English national church should be). Beside these labors he himself testifies

¹ *Ibid.* p. 236.

² *Ibid.* p. 244.

that when these discussions were prepared for publicke in London, his time was eaten up in attendance upon the service of the Parliament or City, for the supply of the poor of the City with wood (during the stop of coal from Newcastle, and the mutinie of the poor for firing.) God is a most holy witness, that these meditations were fitted for publicke view in change of roomes and corners, yea sometimes (upon occasion of travel in the country concerning that business of fuell) in variety of strange houses, sometimes in the fields, in the midst of travel; where he hath been forced to gather and scatter his loose thoughts and papers.¹

At least in the first year of its publication "The Bloudy Tenent" was printed without the name of the author or that of the publisher. The text used below is from the First Series, Volume III, of the Publications of the Narragansett Club, Providence, R. I., 1868, edited by Samuel L. Caldwell. It is a copy of the first edition, and is the first reprint to appear in America. The first reprint of the first edition, or of any edition of the book, appeared in 1848 in England, twenty years before the edition of the Narragansett Club—hardly a flattering commentary on the evolution of historical scholarship in this country.

"The Bloudy Tenent" shows that Williams was not only one of the pioneers in the advocacy of religious toleration, but also one of the world's first true democrats. Professor Parrington has perhaps noted this point more clearly than anybody else. He says:

The just renown of Roger Williams has too long been obscured by ecclesiastical historians, who in emphasizing his defense of the principle of toleration have overlooked the fact that religious toleration was only a necessary deduction from the major principles of his political theory, and that he was concerned with matters far more fundamental than the negative virtue of non-interference in the domain of individual faith. He was primarily a political philosopher rather than a theologian—one of the acutest and most searching of his generation of Englishmen, the teacher of Vane and Cromwell and Milton, a fore-runner

¹ "The Bloudy Tenent yet more Bloudy." Publications of the Narragansett Club. First Series. Vol. IV. Providence, R. I. 1870. p. 38.

of Locke and the natural-rights school, one of the notable democratic thinkers that the English race has produced.¹

A goodly portion of the book is taken up with a vigorous and keen discussion of the comparative rights of the people and the sovereign. On this matter Williams was always extremely clear and unequivocal. In one place he summarizes his position thus:

. . . the Sovereigne, originall, and foundation of civill power lies in the people. . . . And if so . . . a People may erect and establish what forme of Government seems to them most meete for their civill condition: It is evident that such Governments as are by them erected and established, have no more power, nor for no longer time, then the civill power or people consenting and agreeing shall betruest them with. This is clear not only in Reason, but in the experience of all commonweales, where the people are not deprived of their naturall freedom by the power of Tyrants.²

On this foundation of democratic political theory Williams built his stately edifice of democratic ecclesiastical thinking. It was far more courageous than that in Milton's "Areopagitica," which, curiously enough, was published in the same year as "The Bloudy Tenent." For Milton specifically excludes "Popery and open superstition"³ from among things fit for toleration in the civil state. Williams excludes nothing:

(1) God requireth not any uniformity of Religion to be inacted and inforced in any civill state; which inforced uniformity (sooner or later) is the greatest occasion of civill Warre, ravishing of conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus in his servants, and of the hypocrisie and destruction of millions of souls. (2) It is the will and command of God, that . . . a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or Antichristian consciences and worships, bee granted to all men in all Nations and Countries: and they are onely to be fought against with that Sword which is an onely (in Soule matters) able to conquer, to wit, the

¹ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 66.

² "The Bloudy Tenent." Narragansett Club edition. p. 248.

³ "Areopagitica," edited by Edward Arber. p. 76.

Sword of Gods Spirit, the Word of God. (3) True civility and Christianity may both flourish in a state of Kingdome, notwithstanding the permission of divers and contrary consciences, either of Jew or Gentile.¹

Williams returned to Rhode Island in the Fall of 1644, and with him went a copy of "The Bloody Tenent." Eventually it reached John Cotton, who replied to it in a book entitled, "The Bloody Tenent washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb," which was published in London in 1647. Williams immediately wrote a rejoinder, but it did not get into print in London until his second visit there in 1652. Its full title is: "The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody: by Mr. Cottons endeavour to wash it white in the Blood of the Lambe; Of whose precious Blood, spilt in the Blood of his Servants: and of the blood of Millions spilt in former and later Wars for Conscience sake, That Most Bloody of Persecution for cause of Conscience, upon a second Tryal, is found now more apparently and more notoriously guilty. By R. Williams of Providence in New-England. London for Giles Calvert, and are to be sold at the black-spread-Eagle at the West-end of Pauls. 1652." The main ideas in it are identical with those in "The Bloody Tenent," but they are put forth with more eloquence and vigor. Williams is unquestionably at his best here as a writer. There is, in fact, a passage in it that is the most blistering, the most glowing and the most forceful piece of prose written in the American Colonies in the whole Seventeenth Century, and, indeed, for fifty years more.

And for myself, I must proclaim before the most holy God, angels, and men, that . . . yet this is a foul, a black, and a bloody tenent; a tenent of high blasphemy against the God of peace, the God of order, who hath of one blood made all mankind to dwell upon the face of the earth; . . . a tenent warring against the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus; . . . a tenent fighting against the sweet end of his coming, which was not to destroy men's lives for their religions, but to save them; . . . a tenent fighting against the spirit of love, holiness, and meekness, by kindling fiery spirits of false zeal and fury; . . . a tenent against which the blessed souls under the altar cry aloud for vengeance, this tenent having cut their throats, torn out their hearts, and

¹ "The Bloody Tenent." The Narragansett Club edition. p. 3.

poured forth their blood, in all ages, as the only heretics and blasphemers in the world; a tenent which no uncleanness, no adultery, incest, sodomy, or bestiality can equal, — this ravishing and forcing . . . the very souls and consciences of all the nations and inhabitants of the world; . . . a tenent that fights against the common principles of all civility, and the very civil being and combinations of men . . . by commixing . . . a spiritual and civil state together; . . . a tenent that kindles the devouring flames of combustions and wars in most nations of the world; . . . a tenent all besprinkled with the bloody murders, stabs, and poisonings, pistollings, powder-plots, and so forth, against many famous kings, princes, and states; . . . a tenent all red and bloody with those most barbarous and tiger-like massacres of so many thousand and ten thousands, formerly in France and other parts, and so lately and so horribly in Ireland; . . . a tenent that stunts the growth and flourishing of the most likely and hopefulest commonweals and countries; . . . lastly a tenent in England most unseasonable, as pouring oil upon the flames which the high wisdom of the parliament, by easing the yokes of men's consciences, had begun to quench. In the sad consideration of all which, . . . let heaven and earth judge of the washing and color of this tenent. . . . For me, . . . I must profess, while heaven and earth lasts, that no one tenent that either London, England, or the world, doth harbor, is so heretical, blasphemous, seditious, and dangerous, to the corporal, to the spiritual, to the present, to the eternal good of men, as the bloody tenent (however washed and whited) . . . of persecution for cause of conscience.¹

Williams wrote many other books and pamphlets, mostly dealing with religion and the welfare of the Indians. Two of them deserve special attention. The first is only twenty-one pages long and is entitled, "Christening make not Christians, or a Briefe Discourse concerning that name Heathen, commonly given to the Indians. As also concerning that great point of their conversion. Published according to order. London, Printed by Iane Coe, for I. H. 1645." It is full of kindness for the Indian, and its central motif is a plea to all not to

¹ "The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody." Publications of the Narragansett Club. First Series. Vol. IV. Providence, R. I. 1870. Edited by Samuel L. Caldwell. pp. 493-501. This edition is a reprint of a copy of the first edition.

call the New England Indians "Heathen Dogges."¹ They are rapidly approaching Christianity, says Williams, and all that is needed to make their conversion complete is ordinary decency.

The second book dealing with the Indians is "A Key into the Language of America: or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New England. Together, with briefe Observations of the Customes, Manners and Worships, &c. of the aforesaid Natives, in Peace and Warre, in Life and Death. On all which are added Spirituall observations, Generall and Particular by the Author, of chiefe and speciall use (upon all occasions,) to all the English Inhabiting those parts: yet pleasant and profitable to the view of all men: by Roger Williams of Providence in New-England. London. Printed by Gregory Dexter. 1643." In the main it is a collection of various Indian expressions, and as such is of great philological value. There are also many brief observations on the manners and customs of the several tribes, as the title indicates, and, in addition, stray bits of poetry. The tone throughout, as may be imagined, is one of great friendliness toward the Indian, and there is evident a keen solicitude for more peaceful relations between them and the English colonists. Williams says in one place:

Nature knowes no difference between Europe and Americans in blood, birth, bodies, &c. God having one blood made all mankind, Acts 17. and all by being Children, Ephes. 2.

More particularly:

*Boast not proud English, of thy birth & blood,
Thy brother Indian is by birth as Good.
Of one blood God made Him, and Thee & All,
As wise, as faire, as strong, as personal.
By nature wrath's his portion, thine no more
Till Grace his soule and thine in Christ restore,
Make sure thy second birth, else thou shalt see,
Heaven ope to Indians wild, but shut to thee.²*

¹ Edition of the Rhode Island Historical Tracts, No. 14. Providence: Sidney S. Rider. 1881. Edited by Henry Martyn Dexter. p. 2. This is an exact reprint of the edition in the British Museum, which Dexter discovered there, more or less accidentally, in 1881. There are also many interesting Williams letters included in this American reprint.

² Edition of the Publications of the Narragansett Club. First Series. Vol. I. Providence, R. I. 1866. p. 81. There is a good biographical introduction here by the highly competent historian of early New England, Dr. Reuben Aldridge Guild.

Further on he tells of the following two customs among the Indians:

Sometimes a man shall meet a lame man or an old man with a Staffe: but generally a Starre is a rare sight in the hand of the eldest, their constitution is so strong, I have upon occasion travelled many a score, yea many a hundredth mile amongst them, without need of stick or staffe, for any appearance of danger amongst them: yet it is a rule amongst them, that it is not good for a man to travell without a Weapon nor alone. . . . If any Robbery fall out in Travell, between Person of diverse States, the offended State send for Justice, If no Justice bee granted and recompence made, they grant out a kind of letter of Mart to take satisfaction themselves; yet they are carefull not to exceed in taking from other, beyond the proportion of their owne losse.¹

One more excerpt from this interesting and valuable book:

The generall Observation of the Beasts

The Wildernesse is a cleere resemblance of the world, where greedie and furious men persecute and devoure the harmlesse and innocent as the wilde beasts pursue and devoure the Hinds and Roes.

More particular

1. *The Indians, Wolves, yea, Dogs and Swine,
I have knowne the Deere devoure,
Gods children are sweet prey to all;
But yet the end proves sowre.*
2. *For though Gods children lose their lives,
They shall not loose an haire;
But shall arise, and judge all those,
That now their Iudges are.*
3. *New-England's wilde beasts are not fierce,
As other wild beasts are:
Some men are not so fierce, and yet
From mildness are they farre.²*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 101-102.

² *Ibid.* pp. 130-131.

Williams was not a poet. He was a prose writer, and one of tremendous effectiveness. There is nothing like the passage quoted above from "The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody" in the whole range of American literature in the Seventeenth Century. In it spoke a great man, one of the glories of American history. He preached religious liberty before Milton and Locke, and with much more eloquence and comprehensiveness, even though with less learning and logic. And also with infinitely more courage. To write "The Bloudy Tenent" and "The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody" in the New England of John Cotton and John Winthrop required a daring and a self-sacrifice that have always been rare in human history, and especially in that of the United States. Were it not for his herculean labors the bigotry and abysmal spiritual darkness that was New England for the following two centuries, and by a curious turn of history is so today once more, would have been even more black and appalling. That no adequate critical and biographical study of him has yet been written is one of the shames of American scholarship. He still lies buried in the files of the Narragansett Club, while the two Mathers have been enshrined in two sumptuous volumes by two Harvard professors.¹

3. THE LITERATURE OF THE WARS WITH THE INDIANS

The English-Indian wars, which lasted from 1674 to 1676, aroused considerable scribbling among the more literate of the Puritans. The suffering caused by them was almost universal, and it seems that nearly everybody felt forced to put it on paper. Whenever a centenary of the founding of a Massachusetts town comes around and a history of it is published, more of the stuff written about the struggles with the Indians is dredged up. But these accounts might just as well remain in oblivion. They are neither literature nor history.² Some of them

¹ "Increase Mather," by Kenneth B. Murdock. The Harvard University Press. 1926; "Cotton Mather; The Puritan Priest," by Barrett Wendell. N. Y. 1891. In this connection it is curious to note that Wendell in "A Literary History of America" mentions Williams only four times, and in three citations his name appears as one in a series. In the same history he devotes eleven pages to Cotton Mather and three to the Bay Psalm Book and "The Day of Doom." As I write this there is published a new biography: "Roger Williams: Prophet and Pioneer," by Emily Easton. Boston. 1930. It is better written than the Carpenter biography, but it contains no new material, and leaves much to be desired in the way of interpretation.

² One of the most bizarre judgments in the history of American criticism is that of Dr.

were apparently put on paper with the purpose of justifying the harsh treatment accorded by the colonists to their Indian neighbors; others are religious tracts, and were written by clergymen who saw the finger of God in the sufferings inflicted upon the English; and the rest are pure braggadocio, devoid of all merit. But whatever we may think of them now, in their day they were widely read. They were, indeed, the only thing in existence in New England then comparable to the modern novel. They formed the recreational reading of the time, and remained so for many years thereafter. They were the Wild West stories of New England until about the time of the Revolution. On this point Professor Cairns has made the following acute observation: "In spirit, at least, a connection may be traced between these narratives and the Nineteenth Century in the manner of Cooper."¹

A. MARY ROWLANDSON

Perhaps the best known of the narratives regarding the Indian wars and captivities is that of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, the full title of which is "The Sovereignty & Goodness of God, Together with the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed; Being a Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Commended by her, to all that desires to know the lords doings to, and dealings with Her. Especially to her dear Children and Relations. The second Addition Corrected and amended. Written by her own Hand for her private Use, and now made Publick at the earnest Desire of some Friends, and for the benefit of the Afflicted. Cambridge, Printed by Samuel Green, 1682." Mrs. Rowlandson was the wife of the first minister of Lancaster, Mass. In the Winter of 1676, while her husband was away in Boston, the town in which she lived was suddenly assaulted and destroyed by the Indians, and she with her children was carried into captivity, and apparently experienced horrible treatment at their hands. After nearly twelve weeks she was ransomed, with money raised for the purpose by the women of Boston and vicinity.

The earliest edition of the book known to exist is the second one

George Parker Winship, librarian of the Widener Library at Harvard. In "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. p. 6, he says, "There is nothing in English, or in any other language, that surpasses these narratives of Indian captivities in vividness or in the bare statement of physical suffering and of mental torments." The quotations which follow will show how absurd this pronouncement is.

¹ "A History of American Literature." Cairns. p. 60.

of 1682.¹ Two authorities have called it "an authentic and graphic contemporary delineation of the manners and customs of the primitive children of the soil, from whom our ancestors relentlessly wrested their beautiful and beloved heritage, in order to enrich us and our posterity."² The book caught the imagination of the people of New and Old England immediately. "It at once commanded attention in Old as well as New England. No book of its period in America can boast equal evidence of enduring public favor with this work of a comparatively uneducated Lancaster goodwife; and very few books in any age or tongue, if we except the imaginative masterpieces of inspired genius, have been distinguished with more editions."³ According to the best available records it has gone through at least thirty editions since publication.⁴

Professor Tyler thinks that it is an "exquisite literary memorial," and goes on to speak of it thus: "The diction . . . is admirable, — the pure, idiomatic, and sinewy English of a cultivated American matron."⁵ This is high praise indeed, but curiously enough he devotes less than a page to the woman, and does not make as much as one quotation from her book. Mrs. Rowlandson, it seems to me, does not deserve all this adulation. To call her little book — it is only seventy-three pages long — "exquisite," and to speak of her diction as "pure . . . and sinewy" is simply to let one's admiration for her fortitude run away with one's critical judgment of her actual writing. She wrote an English that was no more distinguished than that of hundreds of others of her day who have gone down into obscurity. Very likely it is her sex and the hullabalo that her captivity created in Boston that are to blame for her survival.

As to whether her account is "authentic," as Messrs. Nourse and Thayer claim, it is difficult to say. They offer no substantiation for their judgment, and such careful historians as Edward Channing,

¹ Tyler, in Vol. II. p. 138, says that this is the year of the first edition, but cites no authority for his statement. He is probably wrong. The editors of what is unquestionably the most authoritative reprint of Mrs. Rowlandson's book deny any knowledge of a first reprint. I refer to the facsimile reprint, with "A Map of her Removes, Biographical & Historical Notes, and the last Sermon of her husband Rev. Joseph Rowlandson, Lancaster, Massachusetts, 1903." The preface to this edition is by Henry Stedman Nourse and John Eliot Thayer, both of Lancaster, who have had access to all available documents in the town.

² Nourse and Thayer. p. v.

³ *Ibid.* pp. v-vi.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. vi.

⁵ Tyler, Vol. II. pp. 138-139. Professor Tyler's notion that Mrs. Rowlandson was "cultivated" is without ground. Nourse and Thayer, who are natives of her own town, and have had access to all the records, speak of her as "comparatively uneducated."

Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, and James Truslow Adams leave Mrs. Rowlandson out of their books completely.

She begins her narrative in this manner :

On the tenth of February 1675, Came the Indians with great numbers upon Lancaster : Their first coming was about Sunrising; hearing the noise of some Guns we looked out; several houses were burning, and the Smoke ascending to Heaven. There were five persons taken in one house, the Father, and the Mother and a sucking child they knockt on the head; the other two they took and carried away alive. Ther were two others, who being out of their Garrison upon some occasion, were set upon; one was knockt on the head, the other escaped: Another their was who running along was shot and wounded, and fell down; he begged of them his life, promising them Money (as they told me) but they would not hearken to him but knockt him in the head, and stript him naked, and split open his Bowels. . . .

At length they came and beset our own house. . . . Now is the dreadful hour come, that I have often heard (in time of War, as it was the case of others) but now mine eyes see it. Some in our house were fighting for their lives, others were wallowing in their blood, the House on fire over our heads, and the bloody Heathen ready to knock us on the head, if we stired out. Now might we hear Mothers & Children crying out for themselves, and one another, Lord, what shall we do? Then I took my Children (and one of my sisters hers) to go forth and leave the house: but as soon as we came to the dore and appeared, the Indians shot so thick that the bullets rattled against the House, as if they had taken an handfull of stones and threw them, so that we were fain to give back. We had six stout Dogs belonging to our Garrison, but none of them would stir, though another time, if any Indian had come to the door, they were ready to fly upon him and tear him down. . . . No sooner were we out of the House, but my Brother in Law (being before wounded, in defending the house, in or near the throat) fell down dead, whereat the Indians scornfully shouted, and hallowed, and were presently upon, stripping off his cloaths, the bullets flying thick, one went through my side, and the same (as would seem) through the bowels and hand of my dear Child in my arms. . . . The Indians laid hold of me, pulling me one way, and the Children another,

and said, Come go along with us; I told them they would kill me: they answered, If I were willing to go along with them they would not hurt me.

Oh the doleful sight that now was to behold at this House! . . . Of thirty seven persons who were in this one House, none escaped either present death, or a bitter captivity, save only one, who might say as he. Job. 1. 15. And I only am escaped alone to tell the News. There were twelve killed, some shot, some stab'd with their Spears, some knock'd down with their Hatchets. . . . There was one who was chopt into the head with a Hatchet, and stript naked, and yet was crawling up and down.

. . . that I may the better declare what happened to me during that grievous Captivity I shall particularly speak of the severall Removes we had up and down the Wilderness.¹

The rest of the book is concerned with these "removes." It is written in the same bloated style as the introduction, and is also full of incidents that tax one's credulity. Mrs. Rowlandson's allegation that the Indians were a barbarous and murderous people are refuted by her own narrative, and her book thus becomes doubly incredible. Here, for instance, is her description of some of her experiences in the eighth remove:

. . . one of them asked me, whi I wept, I could hardly tell what to say: yet I answered, they would kill me: No, said he, none will hurt you. Then came one of them and gave me two spoon-fulls of Meal to comfort me, and another gave me a half pint of Pease; which was more worth than many Bushels at another time. Then I went to see King Philip, he bade me come in and sit down, and asked me whether I would smoke it (a usual Complement now adayes amongst Saints and Sinners) but this no way suited me. For though I had formerly used Tobacco, yet I left it ever since I was first taken. It seems to be a Bait, the Devil Layes to make men loose their precious time: I remember with shame, how formerly, when I had taken two or three pipes, I was presently ready for another, such a bewitching thing it is: But I thank God, he has now given me power over it; surely there are many who may be better imployed than to ly sucking a stinking Tobacco-pipe. . . . During my abode in this place, Philip spake

¹ Nourse and Thayer edition. pp. 1-6.

to me to make a shirt for his boy, which I did, for which he gave me a shilling: I offered the money to my master, but he bade me keep it: and with it I bought a piece of Horse-flesh. Afterward he asked me to make a cap for his boy, for which he invited me to Dinner. I went, and he gave me a Pancake, about as big as two fingers; it was made of parched wheat, beaten and fried in Bears grease, but I thought I never tasted pleasanter meat in my life. There was a Squaw who asked me to make a shirt for her Sannup, for which she gave me a piece of Bear. Another asked me to knit a pair of Stockine, for which she gave me a quart of Pease: . . .¹

B. WILLIAM HUBBARD

Second in contemporary popularity to Mrs. Rowlandson as a writer of thrillers about the Indian wars was the Rev. William Hubbard. He was born in England, probably in 1621, and was one of the first class of nine to graduate from Harvard in 1642. What he was at from then on till 1666 is not known, but it is of record that from that year till his death in 1704 he was minister of the church at Ipswich. He was a man of immense learning and great influence in the Colony,² and very effective as a preacher and sermon writer. James Savage says of his sermons that they are masterpieces of style.³ This is plainly an exaggeration. His sermons are readable, but no better than those of such men as Urian Oakes and Thomas Hooker. Even Professor Tyler, with his weakness for imputing elegance and power to so many of the early New England divines, finds it necessary to file a caveat to Savage's opinion.⁴

Hubbard's two most important books are histories. The first, "A General History of New England, From The Discovery to MDCLXXX," has had a curious history of its own. Hubbard had been working upon it in obscurity for years, but finally the magistrates of the Massachusetts Bay Colony took notice of it. "The General Court, 11 Oct. 1682, granted £50 to the Author, 'as a manifestation of thankfulness' for this history, he transcribing fairly that

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 50-51.

² See the Samuel G. Drake edition of Hubbard's "History of the Indian Wars in New England." Roxbury, Mass. 1865. Preface. pp. xx-xxx.

³ The *North American Review*. Vol. II. p. 223.

⁴ Tyler. II. p. 134, footnote 2.

it may be the more easily perused."¹ Hubbard transcribed it, but there is no record that he ever got the promised £50 for doing so, at least not the whole of it. The MS. was soon lost from public sight, and probably would have been lost forever were it not for John Eliot's father, who, it is believed, rescued the transcribed copy from the fury of the mob during the depredations on the house, furniture and library of Governor Hutchinson.² The first edition was not published till 1815 by the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the second edition was published thirty-three years afterward.

As history the book is quite worthless. It is made up in the main of big chunks taken from the chronicles of Morton, Winthrop, Bradford and others, with no credit given to any of them. In fact, no authorities of any kind are cited. But what is much more important, it is full of errors of fact. A student of parts, living at the time in Plymouth, said of it in a letter to Increase Mather that "the mistakes are judged to be more than the truths in it."³

Hubbard's second book deals with the Indian wars, and was quite popular in its day.⁴ Its full title is "A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians. In New-England, from the first planting thereof in the year 1607 to the present year 1677. But chiefly of the late Troubles in the two last years, 1675. and 1676. To which is added a Discourse about the Warre with the Pequods. In the year 1637. By W. Hubbard, Minister of Ipswich. Printed by John Foster, in the year 1677." The second American edition was not published till nearly a hundred years afterward — in 1775.

As with "A General History of New England" the Indian book is full of inaccuracies. It is not strange that this is so. Hubbard apparently wrote it with the purpose of defending the Colonies' dealings with the natives: there were reports current in England that those dealings were harsh and inhuman, and they tended to cool the interest

¹ Quoted in Hubbard's "General History of New England." Second edition, collated with the original MS. Boston. 1848. First edition published in Cambridge, Mass., by the Massachusetts Historical Society, in 1815, with a prefatory notice by A. Holmes and Joseph McKean. The present second edition edited by William Thaddeus Harris. p. iii.

² *Ibid.* p. iii.

³ Quoted by Tyler. Vol. II. p. 136; see also, on this point, the preface to the Harris edition of the book, p. iv. One would think that such an historian as James Truslow Adams would handle the discredited Hubbard warily. Yet in "The Founding of New England," he quotes him twice as an authority — pp. 97 and 354. Professor Channing makes no mention of Hubbard at all, and neither does Dr. Elroy McEndree Avery.

⁴ "Hubbard's History of the Indian Wars in New England. From the original Work, by the Rev. William Hubbard. Carefully revised, & accompanied with an historical Preface, Life and Pedigree of the Author, and extensive notes." By Samuel G. Drake. Printed for W. Elliot Woodward. Roxbury, Mass. 1865. 2 vols. Vol. I. p. vi.

of the capitalists in the home country in the affairs of New England. Hubbard's account is always one-sided. It is significant that the first edition was printed with the formal authorization of Simon Bradstreet, Daniel Dennison, and Joseph Dudley, the three leading magistrates of the Massachusetts Bay Colony at the time.

As for its literary value, it must be said that it falls far below that of Mrs. Rowlandson's work. The latter, otiose in style and full of stretchers as it is, at least has some human feeling in it; the same cannot be said of the Hubbard book. Here is a typical passage:

. . . on June 28 they all [two companies] arrived at Swanzy, when by the Advice of Captain Cudworth . . . they were removed to Head Quarters; . . . within a Quarter of a Mile of the Bridge leading into Philips Lands. The arriving there some little Time before Night, twelve of the Troopers, unwilling to lose Time, passed over the Bridg, for Discovery into the enemies territories, where they found the rude Welcome of eight or ten Indians firing upon them out of Bushes, killing one William Hammond, wounding Corporal Belcher, his Horse also being shot down under him; the Rest of the said Troopers having discharged upon those Indians that ran away after the first shot, carried off their two dead and wounded Companions, and so retired to the main Guard for that Night, pitching in a Barricado about Mr. Miles his house. The Enemy thought to have braved it out by a bold Assault or two at the first; but their Hearts soon began to fail them when they perceived the Massachusets and Plimouth Forces engaged them: for the next Morning they shouted twice or thrice, at Half a Miles Distance, and nine or ten of them shewing themselves on this Side the Bridg: our horsemen with the whole Body of the Privateers under Captain Mosely, not at all daunted by such kind of Alarms, nor willing so to lose the Bridg, ran violently down upon them over the said Bridg, pursuing them a Mile and a Quarter on the other Side: Ensign Savage, that young martial Spark, scarce twenty Years of Age, had at that Time one Bullet lodged in his Thigh, another shot through the Brim of his Hat, by ten or twelve of the Enemy discharging upon him together, while he boldly held up his Colours in Front of his Company. . . . This resolute Charge of the English-Forces upon the Enemy made them quit their Place on Mount-hope that very Night, where Philip was

never seen after, till the next Year, when he was by a divine Mandate sent back, there to receive the Reward of his Wickedness where he first began his Mischief.¹

C. INCREASE MATHER, BENJAMIN CHURCH
and JOHN WILLIAMS

Increase Mather published two works on the New England Indian wars to the close of King Philip's. His main purpose was not historical, but religious. He argued that the reason the Almighty afflicted the Colonies with the wars was to chastise them for their delinquencies from the orthodox faith — not praying enough, wearing veils, breaking the Sabbath, laughing too much, etc. Mr. Samuel G. Drake is unquestionably right in his remark that "the Works of Mather . . . are inferior as a whole to the Work of Mr. Hubbard."² Professor Tyler does not think them worthy of even mention.

Benjamin Church's book is entitled "Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip's War . . . as also of Expeditions more lately made against the Common Enemy and Indian Rebels in the Eastern Parts of New England." He lived in the years 1639-1718, and his book was published in 1716. Unlike Hubbard or Mather he was a participant in the wars; in fact, he was one of the leading Indian fighters of his day. Also, he was one of the few writers of his time who was not a minister or a graduate of Harvard. His book deals largely with the exploits of "Captain Church," and is crudely written. Perhaps the best comment on it is that by Professor William B. Cairns in his "A History of American Literature": "In many ways it suggests the work of Captain John Smith a century earlier."³

The Rev. John Williams, minister of Deerfield, Mass., went through the same experiences as Mrs. Rowlandson, but twenty-two years later. The Indians captured him and his family, and held them for more than two years. His account is entitled, "The Redeemed Captive," and was published in 1707. It has since gone through six reprintings. As literature it ranks somewhat lower than Mrs. Rowlandson's account. How it rates as history it is difficult to say. All the leading historians ignore it.

¹ Drake edition. Vol. I. pp. 67-71.

² Drake edition of Hubbard's "History of the Indian Wars in New England." Vol. I. p. xv.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 59.

CHAPTER X

*The Middle Colonies in
the Seventeenth Century*

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The Middle Colonies in the Seventeenth Century

THE MIDDLE COLONIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey—were even more barren, in the field of literature, than either New England or the Southern Colonies. Of course, considerable writing went on in them, as in their sister Colonies to the north and to the south, but it was of trivial literary value, and what is more important, of little influence on the subsequent literature of the land. Say what one will about the Puritan literature in the first century of English colonization on this continent, it left a lasting mark on the writing and thinking of the section, and, in fact, on the rest of the country. That the prevailing culture of America is still Puritan at heart is due almost wholly to the writings of the early Calvinistic divines of Massachusetts and Connecticut, and, to a lesser degree, of Rhode Island.

The three middle Colonies were far more tolerant in religion and more civilized in general than New England. But they were not as devoted to the book as were the Puritans, and produced very little literature, at least of a lasting variety. Life in them was much more pleasant than in the North, but it was also less significant. In this way they resembled the Southern Colonies. They were interested primarily in manners, not in matters of the intellect. There was no earnest, all-important principle moving them, as there was among the Puritans.

New Amsterdam was founded by the Dutch in 1623, and remained completely Dutch for the next forty-one years. It was only in 1664 that the English showed any appreciable population there, but it was not long after that they captured the town. The New Amsterdam Dutch, despite the stolidity of their race, had produced a respectable culture before the coming of the English, and kept on producing it for many years thereafter. Several poets, theologians, and physicians of more than ordinary competence had sprung from their midst.

Their writings were better than those of the Southern Colonies.¹ But Dutch literature does not concern us here.

The town as a whole, however, showed little interest in intellectual matters. The writers referred to seem to have sprung up despite the general lethargy. The incoming English succumbed to the prevailing intellectual drowsiness. Drs. Charles A. and Mary R. Beard have this to say of Seventeenth Century New York:

Though its ruling order of merchants and landed gentry was mixed, being composed of English, Dutch, Scotch, and French Huguenots, its social distinctions seem to have been sharper than in New England or the Lower Middle Colonies. The richest families spent their Winters in New York City, where amusements of various kinds from the theatre to bull-fighting were furnished for their diversion, and they lived during the Summer on their estates up the Hudson or on Long Island. In general, the upper classes of the province were freer from religious inhibitions on pleasure and less given to philosophic speculation than their Puritan neighbors and less scientific in their interests than the intellectuals of Philadelphia. While the Anglican church was established in the Colony by law, not one-tenth of the people belonged to that communion or paid any attention to its ministrations. Dissent rather than conformity of any type was the note of the province. So there was a wide liberty of opinion for all except Catholics, but it was apparently the liberty of indifference, not of reasoned toleration of skepticism.²

This indifference toward religious affairs had its counterpart in an indifference toward general cultural affairs. The historian William Smith, writing in 1757, says that for a long time his father and another person "were the only academics" in the province.³ "Our schools," he adds, "are of the lowest order—the instructors want instruction; and through a long and shameful neglect of all the arts and sciences, our common speech is extremely corrupt; and the evidences of bad taste, both as to thought and language, are visible in all our proceedings, public and private."⁴ He ends his general ob-

¹ See "Anthology of New Netherland; or, Translations from the early Dutch poets of New York, with Memoirs of their Lives," by Henry C. Murphy. N. Y. 1865.

² "The Rise of American Civilization." Vol. I. p. 144.

³ "A History of New York." 2 vols. Vol. II. p. 113.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 328.

servations with this exclamation: "What a contrast in everything respecting the cultivation of science between this and the Colonies first settled by the English!"¹

This general cultural barrenness of early New York is brought out even more forcibly when we consider that the first college of the town, King's College, now Columbia, was not founded till 1754, one hundred and nineteen years after Harvard, and sixty-two years after William and Mary! Again, the first English newspaper did not appear in the Colony till 1725, thirty-five years after the appearance of the first newspaper in Massachusetts. And the first English almanac in the province saw the light of day only in 1679, fifty-eight years after the publication of the first almanac in Boston.

It is thus not strange that in the matter of books the New York of the Seventeenth Century had nothing whatever to show. It seems that the Englishmen in the province could not produce anything even approaching the level of the Dutch writers of their time and place. There were, of course, several annalists and theologians, but only two of them deserve any notice at all. The first was William Denton, the son of a Connecticut minister. He removed to New York in 1644, and there established himself as a landowner and politician. In 1670 he published in London a twenty-two-page book entitled, "A Brief Description of New York." To speak of it in the same breath even with the annals of Alexander Whitaker or Edward Johnson, not to mention Winthrop or Bradford or Thomas Morton, would be simply absurd. The other New Yorker deserving of mention was Lewis Morris, who was born in the province in 1671, served as its chief justice for some time, and died in 1746 as royal Governor of New Jersey. He was apparently a public officer of genuine ability, and in that capacity made a trip to England in 1735. He never wrote a book, but he made himself somewhat intelligible in his state papers. Several of them are included in William Smith's aforementioned "History of New York."

Pennsylvania was, in many ways, the most interesting of the early Colonies, next, of course, to Massachusetts. The Quakers had settled there in 1682, and founded a Colony that was unique in its day for its tolerance and general culture. Before the end of the first quarter of the Eighteenth Century, in fact, it became the most civilized spot on the continent, and the intellectual center of America, for a time, moved from Boston to Philadelphia. Benjamin Franklin unquestion-

¹ *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 379.

ably speeded on the transfer, but it would have come about soon or late anyway. It was inevitable.

The literary output of the Colony, however, before Franklin's time, was not much, and of inferior quality. Little space need be given to it. Gabriel Thomas, who was one of the first settlers, published in London in 1698 "An Historical and Geographical Account of the Province and Country of Pennsylvania and of West New Jersey." It was a piece of advertising of the variety so common at the time. Here are two typical excerpts from it:

The air here is very delicate, pleasant, and wholesome; the heavens serene, rarely o'recast, bearing mighty resemblance to the better part of France.¹

Of lawyers and physicians I shall say nothing, because this country is very peaceable and healthy. Long may it so continue, and never have occasion for the tongue of the one nor the pen of the other, both equally destructive of men's estates and lives.²

One Richard Frame published in Philadelphia, in 1692, "A Short Description of Pennsylvania; or, A relation what things are known, enjoyed, and like to be discovered in the said province." At about the same time (the date is uncertain) one John Holme published "A True Relation of the Flourishing State of Pennsylvania." Both are in what probably has to be called verse, and both are on the same level as the celebrated "Newes from Virginia" by Richard Rich. Professor Tyler rightly says of them that "they approach the idiotic."³

There was, however, one writer who produced a tolerably readable book. He was Jonathan Dickenson, who after some time in Jamaica, sailed in 1696 for Pennsylvania with his wife, infant child and some Negro servants. On the voyage they were cast on the coast of Florida, and it was only after terrible hardships that they finally reached their destination. Dickenson put down his experiences in a book entitled, "God's Protecting Providence Man's surest Help and Defence in Times of greatest Difficulty and most eminent Danger." As writing, it is on about the level of William Hubbard's history of the New Eng-

¹ "A History of New York." 2 vols. Vol. II. Edition of Cyrus Townsend Brady. Cleveland. 1903. p. 7. There is an excellent introduction here by Mr. Brady, and a map.

² *Ibid.* p. 32.

³ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 230.

land Indian wars, though probably more truthful. Dickenson finally became chief justice of the province, and died there in 1722.

New Jersey was mainly peopled by Dutch and Quakers, and till well into the Eighteenth Century was a part of New York, both politically and culturally. It produced no writers of its own who are worthy of any mention.

The Dutch, German, French and other Continental peoples in America in the Seventeenth Century had almost no effect on the English culture of the time. Indeed, it was not till very recent times that the predominant Anglo-Saxon stock of this country was in any serious way affected by the foreign blood or ideas in its midst.

Beyond question, the overwhelming majority of the white people in the Colonies were of English descent; the arrangement of classes was English; the law which held together the whole social order was English in essence, modified, of course, but primarily English; the dominant religious institutions and modes of theology were English adaptations of Christianity; the types of formal education, the amusements, furniture, fashions, art, and domestic codes were all fundamentally English too. The language of the bench and bar, pulpit and press, was English. Pamphlets and books of the epoch written in Dutch and German no doubt fill a large space on the library shelf; but, in truth, they are remarkable, not so much for their bulk, as for their relative insignificance when measured against the huge mountain of declamations and arguments in English that have come down from that provincial age. . . . Colonial America was basically English.¹

¹ "The Rise of American Civilization." Vol. I. p. 125.

CHAPTER XI

*Newspapers and Almanacs
in Early America*

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A. NEWSPAPERS¹

AMERICAN JOURNALISM HAD NOT YET BEEN BORN IN THE SEVENTEENTH Century—that is, journalism in the modern sense of the word. The first paper published in America was the *Boston Publick Occurrences*. It appeared in 1690, but lived precisely twenty-four hours. The first relatively permanent newspaper to see the light of day on this continent was the *Boston News-Letter*, the first issue of which bears the date of April 20, 1704. In the next four decades newspapers were established in Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina.² They were mainly weeklies, very imperfect in their reports of American news, giving much space to English court life and parliamentary procedure, and to scientific and literary essays.

Most of them were printed in big towns, and “news which depended on them for circulation was in much danger of never getting fifty miles from the editor’s chair.”³ Their difficulties were many. The delivery of English and American news was very uncertain. It took vessels from five to eight weeks to get here, and sometimes even longer, and the post riders from Colony to Colony were frequently delayed for days and weeks on account of inclement weather or bad roads. “Because of such obstacles the news of a fire in Charleston,

¹ For much of the information in this section I am indebted to the following books: “Journalism in the United States, From 1690 to 1872,” by Frederic Hudson. New York. 1873; “History of American Journalism,” by James Melvin Lee. Boston. 1923; “A History of the People of the United States. From the Revolution to the Civil War,” by John Bach McMaster. Vol. I. N. Y. 1886; “The American Nation. A History. From Original Sources, by Associated Scholars.” Vol. VI. “Provincial America. 1690-1740,” by Evarts Boutell Greene. N. Y. 1905; “History of Journalism in the United States,” by George Henry Payne. N. Y. 1920; and “Main Currents in the History of American Journalism,” by Willard Grosvenor Bleyer. Boston. 1927.

² Greene. p. 466.

³ McMaster. p. 35.

S. C., in the Winter of 1741, that destroyed 300 houses and a million dollars' worth of merchandise, as reported in the *South Carolina Gazette*, was not published in the *Boston Gazette* until over two months after it occurred."¹

Previous to 1750 the colonial newspapers were routine productions of printers, "no more distinctive in character than the poorest of present-day country weeklies."² The advertisements in them were a regular but inconspicuous feature. They were usually set in bold type, and sometimes illustrated with small, crude woodcuts, and generally occupied the last column of the last page. The publishers were also printers of books and sellers of a variety of articles. Their own advertisements thus made a strange miscellany. For example, Andrew Bradford, publisher of the *American Weekly Mercury* of Philadelphia, advertised for sale at his shop, not only books and almanacs, but also "very good corks, very good English Pease and Spanish Snuff, very good Lamp-Black and very good Chocolate."

Nostrums were less frequently advertised in colonial newspapers than in the English papers of the same period. The few that were announced have a familiar ring to modern ears. Thus in the *Boston Gazette* of December 18-25, 1727:

To be sold, an Excellent Medicine, which cures the Cholick, Dry Belly-ack, Loss of Limbs, Fevers and Agues, Asthmas, Coughs, and all sorts of Obstructions, Rheumatism, Sickness at the Stomach, Surfeits by Immoderate Eating and Drinking, Weakness, Trembling of the Heart, want of Appetite, Gravel, Melancholy, and Jaundice, and is excellent for the Gout; Which is now Publish'd at the desire of several Persons of Note (who have been wonderfully reliev'd by it). . . .

The early newspapers were greatly handicapped by a strict governmental censorship. In 1664, when there were only two printing presses in Massachusetts (they were the only ones at the time in the Colonies), a Licenser of the Press was appointed by the Governor, permitting printing only in Cambridge, and then only by those licensed. Such restrictions, it must be remembered, were not peculiar to the Colonies; similar ones were in operation in England. Only one year before Charles II had appointed as Licenser of the Press the notorious

¹ Bleyer, pp. 71-72.

² *Ibid.* pp. 74-75. See also Hudson, p. xli.

Sir Roger L'Estrange, who answered Milton's "Areopagitica" with the pamphlet entitled, "No Blind Guides Needed."¹

The Boston *News-Letter*, unlike its predecessor, the Boston *Publick Occurrences*, printed no local news. "Its whole aim seemed to be to keep its readers *au courant* with the affairs of Europe only. In this way it escaped local censure and persecution."² The second paper in America also appeared in Boston. It was called the Boston *Gazette*, and was first published in 1719. In the same year the *American Weekly Mercury* appeared in Philadelphia. James Franklin, brother of Benjamin, started the Boston *Courant* in 1721, but, as the result of persecution by the government, it died six years afterward. Toward the end of its career it was under the nominal management of Benjamin.

The first newspaper to be published in New York was the *Gazette*, which appeared in 1725. Another *Gazette* — a favorite newspaper name in those days — came out in Annapolis, Md., two years later. In 1731 a third was started in Charleston, S. C., and in 1733 a fourth in Newport, R. I. A Virginia *Gazette* first saw the light of day in Williamsburg in 1736. The New Hampshire *Gazette* did not appear till 1756 in Portsmouth. The few copies of these early newspapers that are in existence are nearly all in the possession of private collectors, but the only copy of *Publick Occurrences* extant is in the Colonial State Paper Office in London. It was published and edited by Benjamin Harris at the London Coffee-House in Boston, and set up for him by Richard Pierce on Thursday, September 25, 1690. It was printed on three pages of a folded sheet, with one page entirely blank. There were two columns to a page, and each page was about eleven inches by seven. As the editorial prospectus, which follows immediately, shows, it was first intended as a monthly.

Numb. 1

PUBLICK OCCURRENCES

Both Forreign and Domestick

Boston, Thursday, Sept. 25th, 1690

It is designed that the Countrey shall be furnished once a moneth (or if any Glut of Occurrences happen oftener) with an Account of such considerable things as have arrived into our notice.

¹ See the discussion on this point in Payne. p. 6ff.

² Hudson. p. xxxix.

In order here unto, the Publisher will take what pains he can to obtain a Faithful Relation of all such things; and will particularly make himself beholden to such Persons in Boston whom he knows to have been for their own use the diligent Observers of such matters.

That which is herein proposed, is, First, That Memorable Occurents of Divine Providence may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are. Secondly, That people everywhere may better understand the Circumstances of Publique Affairs, both abroad and at home; which may not only direct their Thoughts at all times, but at some times also to assist their Business and negotiations.

Thirdly, That some thing may be done towards the Curing, or at least the Charming of that Spirit of Lying, which prevails among us, wherefore nothing shall be entered, but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our Information. And when there appears any material mistake in any thing that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next.

Moreover, the Publisher of these Occurrences is willing to engage, that whereas, there are many False Reports, maliciously made, and spread among us, if any well minded person will be at the pains to trace any such false Report, so far as to find out and Convict the First Raiser of it, he will in this paper (unless just Advice be given to the contrary) expose the Name of such person, as A Malicious Raiser of False Report. It is supposed that none will dislike the proposal, but such as intend to be guilty of so villainous a Crime.¹

Hudson reprints the entire contents of this first newspaper in America. Excerpts from it follow:

A very Tragical Accident happened at Watertown the beginning of this Month, and Old man, that was of somewhat a Silent and Morose Temper, but one that had long Enjoyed the reputation of a Sober and a Pious Man, having newly buried his Wife, The Devil took advantage of the Melancholy which he thereupon fell into, his wives discretion and industry had long been the support of his Family, and he seemed hurried with an impertinent fear that he should now come to want before he

¹ Quoted by Hudson. pp. 44-45.

dyed, though he had very careful freinds to look after him who kept a strict eye upon him, lest he should do any harm. But one evening escaping from them into the Cow-house, they there quickly followed him, found hanging by a Rope, which they had used to tye their Calves withal, he was dead with his feet near touching the Ground. . . .

Although Boston did a few weeks ago, meet with a Disaster by Fire, which consumed about twenty Houses near the Mill-break, yet about midnight, between the sixteenth and seventeenth of this Instant, another Fire broke forth near the South-Meeting-House, which consumed about five or six houses, and had almost carried the meeting-house itself, one of the fairest Edifices in the Country, if God had not remarkably assisted the Endeavours of the people to put out the Fire. There were two more considerable Circumstances in the Calamities of this Fire, one was that a young man belonging to the House where the Fire began, unhappily perished in the Flames; it seems that tho' he might sooner awake than some others who did escape, yet he some way lost those Wits that should have taught him to help himself. Another was that the best furnished PRINTING PRESS, of those few that we know of in America was lost; a loss not presently to be repaired. . . .

The chief discourse of this month has been about the affairs of the Western Expedition against Canada. [Nearly a column is given over to this matter.]

Portsmouth, Sept. 20th. Two days since arrived here a small Vessel from Barbadoes, in which is a letter to Captain H. K. of 19th. August that speaks thus, [about the wars in England and in France] . . .

It's reported that City of Cork in Ireland has proclaimed K. William, and turned their French Landlords out of Doors: of this there wants further confirmation.¹

Since *Publick Occurrences* touched upon local and military affairs, it was immediately suppressed by the authorities. At least that was the reason they gave. There was really nothing offensive or sensational in Harris' paper. The authorities probably suppressed it, not because of anything in it, but because they were afraid of the man. Apparently he was a lively fellow, full of ideas that were none too

¹ Quoted in *Ibid.* pp. 45-48.

pleasing to the bureaucrats either here or in England. An English bookseller named Dutton said of him in 1705:

He was a brisk asserter of English liberties, and once printed a book with that very title. He sold a Protestant Petition in King Charles's reign, for which he was fined five pounds; and he was once set in the pillory, but his wife (like a kind Rib) stood by him to defend her husband against the mob . . . ; his conversation is general (but never impertinent) and his wit to all inventions.¹

Harris was an excellent printer, and two years after his paper was stopped he was appointed "Printer to His Excellency the Governor & Council" of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. But he could not stand the Puritans much longer, so he returned to London in 1694. There he went into business as a publisher and seller of books, and also started the London *Post*.

B. ALMANACS²

The almanac is one of the oldest forms of literary production. It has been found in nearly all ages and nations, though "the history of written almanacs has not been traced farther back than the Second Century of the Christian era, at which period it is supposed that they were constructed by the Greeks of Alexandria."³ After the invention of printing, almanacs were among the first printed books. The earliest known to have been printed in England was "The Sheapheard's Kalendar," translated from the French in 1497.

In the Colonies, until the time of the Revolution, "the Bible and

¹ Quoted in Hudson. p. 49.

² The works on which I rely for information in this section are these: "The Origin and Development of the Almanack." A Paper read before the Western Reserve & Northern Ohio Historical Society. January 12, 1887. By Sam Briggs. The Western Reserve Historical Publications, No. 69; An article on almanacs in the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, New Series, Vol. 35, Worcester, Mass., by Clarence S. Brigham; "The Essays, Humor, and Poems of Nathaniel Ames, Father and Son . . . from their Almanacks, 1726-1775 . . .," edited by Sam Briggs. Cleveland. 1891; and the brief sketch which serves as the introduction to "An American Almanac and Treasury of Facts, Statistical, Financial and Political for the Year 1878," edited by Ainsworth R. Spofford, Librarian of Congress in that year. The last was published in New York and Washington in 1878, and continued each year thereafter until and including 1889.

³ Briggs, Western Reserve. p. 441.

the almanac were the only reading matter in many a household.”¹ After the publication of the Freeman’s Oath on the press at Harvard in 1639 the first book issued therefrom was “An *Almanack*, calculated for New England by Mr. Pierce, Mariner.” In the beginning the American almanacs in this country had the calendar merely, with perhaps a reference or two to the coming eclipses. Later there were added astrological predictions, and still later, proverbs, jests, humorous tales, medical essays, historical sketches, and political tracts. “The earliest almanacs issued after the establishment of the press at Cambridge were the productions of eminent men and scholars, all of whom were graduates or undergraduates of Harvard. Many of the individuals only appended their initials to their works, but among those less modest may be noted the names of Danforth, Oakes, Cheever, Chauncey, Brigden, Flint, Dudley, Holyoke, Clough, Sherman, and even the celebrated Mather Family, in the persons of Cotton and Nathaniel, found time among their other literary duties to rejoice the world with an occasional *Ephemeris*.”² There was a remarkable instance of juvenile precocity in the shape of “An Almanack for 1695,” by Increase Gatchell, aged 16.

About the beginning of the Eighteenth Century it was no more necessary to have the imprimatur of the Governor on almanacs, so they spread like wildfire all over the Colonies. Some of their titles were rather quaint: “Poor Joseph,” started in Philadelphia in 1759; “Poor Tom,” started in New York in the same year; “Poor Job,” Newport, R. I., 1750; “Poor Roger,” N. Y., 1762; the celebrated “Poor Richard,” started by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia in 1733, and continued by him up to and including 1767; “Abraham Weatherguesser,” Philadelphia, 1762; and “Copernicus Weatherguesser,” N. Y., 1767. “The New England Almanac” for 1703, edited by Samuel Clough of Boston, is one of the earliest in existence.³ Some of its weather predictions are curious. For April 26 is foretold “misling weather mixt with some dribling showers.” The eclipses of the year 1703, “in the judgments both of Divines and Astrologers, . . . portend great alterations, mutations, changes and troubles to come upon the world.” The “Comet or Æthereal Blaze” seen the year before, is said to have led to “blood-

¹ Brigham. p. 196.

² Briggs, Western Reserve. p. 468.

³ The most complete collection of American almanacs in the United States is in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Mass.

shed, droughts, clashing of armies, and terrible diseases among men." ¹

In 1726 appeared "the most celebrated almanac ever published in America." ² It was compiled by the father of Fisher Ames, Nathaniel Ames, a physician and inn-keeper of Dedham, Mass. It appeared annually till his death in 1764, and was continued for a few years thereafter by his son. In its day it was regarded as far better than Franklin's "Poor Richard." Ames made of it a sort of annual encyclopedia of information and amusement. He printed original prose and verse of his own, and he quoted considerably from the contemporary writers in England. His almanac was thus a vehicle for carrying into the farthest wildernesses of New England and the other Colonies some of the best English literature, introducing, probably for the first time, the works of Addison, Thomson, Pope, Dryden, Butler and Milton.

Here is a specimen of Ames' own poetry. It appears in the almanac for the year 1738:

Had ADAM stood in Innocence till Now,
And his blest Sons had deign'd to hold the Plough
No Labour had fatigu'd, nor Time had spoil'd
His Youth: but Spring had even blooming smil'd,
No Lust for Pelf, nor Heart distressing Pain
Had seiz'd the Miser, nor the rural Swain:
Nor Vice as now with Vertue ne'er had vi'd
And Heaven's Omnipotence is self defy'd.
Nor *Lawyers*, *Priests* nor *Doctors* ne'er had been
If Man had stood against th' Assaults of Sin.
But oh, He fell! and so accurs'd we be
The World is now oblig'd to use all Three.³

Here are samples of his "interlined wisdom and humor." They appear for the year 1734.

JANUARY

Now if the Swamps should catch on fire
They'd burn the Snow and all the mire.

FEBRUARY

Let men Obey the Laws and Women their Husbands.

¹ Spofford. p. 24.

² Briggs. Western Reserve. p. 471.

³ Briggs edition. p. 116.

MAY

Rulers are men before GOD and Gods before men.

JUNE

The Flea Catchers are in great hast.

JULY

Rich men without Wisdom and learning are called
Sheep with Golden Fleeces.

AUGUST

Old Saturn is got so sullen, he will go no further forwards.

SEPTEMBER

Ignorance has the most confidence.

OCTOBER

It is better to have a man without money than money without
a man.

NOVEMBER

Bravery in apparel is nothing worth if the mind be miserable.¹

The almanacs were, true enough, insignificant as literature, but their general influence was tremendous. With their quotations from the Swifts and Popes of contemporary England they brought a trace of culture to the colonist, and with their moral proverbs and wise sayings they installed thrift and industry into him, and thus made him more fit to cope with his hostile environment.

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 94-95.

CHAPTER XII

*The Seventeenth Century—
General Conclusion*

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The Seventeenth Century— General Conclusion

IT IS NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY THAT NEARLY ALL THAT WAS WRITTEN in the Colonies in the Seventeenth Century, in both prose and verse, was rubbish, and that as far as its literary merit is concerned, it deserves to be forgotten. In the preceding pages I have attempted to consider every person who wrote anything of even the slightest contemporary influence, and have quoted extensively from the writings of nearly all of them. The complete product makes pretty dreary reading. The greater part of it was theological in character, and must have been better to listen to than to read. Of all the divines not one stands out as a literary power. The noblest of them all, the Rev. John Eliot, surely deserves better of posterity than it has given him. His kindly character and genuinely Christian attitude toward the Indians were forces for the good. But he wrote very little in English, and that was mainly political in character, and surely of no outstanding literary merit. His writings are the concern more of the political theorist and of the student of the Indians than of the literary historian.

The South was probably a much more pleasant place in the Seventeenth Century than New England, but in literature it was even more barren than the latter. Its people then, as today, were more interested in the social amenities than in books. They had a good time, but when they died they left little trace of having lived. Their one writing that deserves to be remembered at all was "Bacon's Epitaph by his Man." In the section allotted to it I showed some enthusiasm for it, but that was not on account of any great intrinsic literary merit in it; it was solely to register a feeling of satisfaction on coming across something that at least could be read, and that showed traces of decent feeling and some power.

More writing was done in New England, but in quality it was no better than the little that was done in the South. The Puritan theocracy was in complete control, but, strangely enough, the two men

of the time who will be remembered a hundred years from today, even in the more comprehensive histories, were dissenters and were violently persecuted by the ecclesiastics in power. I refer, of course, to Thomas Morton of May-pole fame and to Roger Williams. The first has fared badly at the hands of all the historians from his own day down to the present. He has been denounced as a disturber of the peace, and as a nuisance. But the fact was that he was one of the most intelligent men of his generation. Were it not for him, Roger Williams, the Rev. John Eliot, and one or two others, the New England of the time would have been even blacker culturally than it actually was. But Morton can scarcely be considered as a creator of literature. His "New English Canaan," especially the verses in it, are full of a strange satire and lightness for his day, but that is all that can be said for them. They are a historical curiosity, a pleasant one, to be sure, but nothing more.

Roger Williams was unquestionably the greatest American of the entire Seventeenth Century. He was the first apostle of liberty of conscience in the land, and he was the first American to suffer for it at the hands of the government. No adequate biography of him has yet been put on paper, and no satisfactory study of his political principles or of his general influence has been written. Why he has been so neglected, while such men as Captain John Smith and the Rev. Increase Mather have been studied with immense detail, is one of the mysteries of American scholarship. "The Bloody Tenent" and "The Bloody Tenent yet more Bloody" are among the political classics of America. But as mere writing, one must add, they rank much lower. The simplicity of John Stuart Mill is not in them, and neither is the clarity and eloquence of Jefferson. Their prose is doubtless the best of its time, but in itself leaves much to be desired.

As for the poetry of the Seventeenth Century in America, it was neither poetry nor of America. Most of it was elegiac, and of no intrinsic merit whatever. The rest was theological jingles. America does not figure in it for a moment. The new country, its strangeness, its Indians, its peculiar and amazing fauna and flora, and the impact of all these on the colonials did not interest the early bards in the slightest. Their chief concern was the struggle of their souls with the Devil, and their chance of going to Heaven. It is significant that they did not compose one love-lyric. Mrs. Anne Bradstreet, to be sure, wrote a poem to her husband, but before she was done she confessed that she loved God more. Professor Henry A. Beers has well said,

"American literature had no infancy. That engaging naïveté and that heroic rudeness which give a charm to the early popular tales and songs of Europe find . . . no counterpart on our soil."¹

A. POSTSCRIPT ON INDIAN LITERATURE

The Indians in the Seventeenth Century were by no means as barbaric as the contemporary colonial writers made them out to be. They were probably in the possession of a culture much finer than that of most of their Anglo-Saxon neighbors. As Dr. D. G. Brinton has pointed out, they made "a poor showing of native literature for all the tribes in the vast area of the United States,"² but frequently they were capable of steep ascents, particularly in the field of poetry.³

Here are some specimens of these flights. The following wife-song is from a Micmac tale of enchantment:

There are many men in the world,
But only one is dear to me.
He is good, and brave, and strong.
He swore to love none but me;
He has forgotten me.
It was a bad spirit that changed him,
But I will love none but him.⁴

The following is a Chippeway love-song that has come down to the present day, and was probably quite popular in the Seventeenth Century.

Ah, me, when I think of him, my sweetheart.
As he embarked to return, he put white wampum round my neck,
my sweetheart.
I shall go with you to your native country, my sweetheart.
Alas, my native country is far, far away, my sweetheart.
When I looked back to the spot where we parted, he stood looking after me, my sweetheart.

¹ "Initial Studies in American Letters," by Henry A. Beers. N. Y. 1893. p.10.

² "Aboriginal American Authors," by D. G. Brinton. Philadelphia. 1883. p. 24.

³ For an excellent discussion of the contemporary Indian prose see "Literary Aspects of North American Mythology," by Paul Radin. Canadian Department of Mines. Geological Survey. Museum Bulletin No. 16. Anthropological Series, No. 6, June 15, 1926.

⁴ "Algonquin Legends of New England; or, Myths and Folk Lore of the Micmac, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Tribes," by Charles G. Leland. Boston. 1884. p. 246.

Still, he stood on a tree that had fallen into the water of the river, my sweetheart.

Alas, when I think of him — Alas, when I think of him.¹

Here is another Chippeway love-song:

I will walk into somebody's dwelling,
Into somebody's dwelling will I walk.

To thy dwelling, my dearly beloved,
Some night will I walk, will I walk.

Some night in the Winter, my beloved,
To thy dwelling will I walk.

This very night, my beloved,
To thy dwelling will I walk, will I walk.²

Here is a third early Chippeway love-song, unquestionably the best extant:

My love is tall and graceful as the young pine waving on the hill, and as swift in his course as the noble, stately deer; his hair is flowing, and dark as the blackbird that floats through the air, and his eyes, like the eagle's, both piercing and bright; his heart, it is fearless and great, and his arm it is strong in the fight, as this bow made of iron-wood which he easily bends. His aim is as sure in the fight and chase, as the hawk, which ne'er misses its prey. Ah, aid me, ye spirits! of water, of earth, and of sky, while I sing in his praise; and my voice shall be heard, it shall ring through the sky; and echo, repeating the same, shall cause it to swell in the breadth of the wind; and his fame shall be spread throughout the land, and his name shall be known beyond the lakes.³

Instead of trying to make Christians out of the Indians, the colonial Americans might well have listened to their love-songs, and got some civilization into themselves. Mrs. Bradstreet, Michael Wigglesworth and the authors of the Bay Psalm Book had much to learn from their heathen neighbors.

¹ "Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States. Collected and prepared under the Bureau of Indian Affairs per act of Congress of March 3, 1847," by Henry R. Schoolcraft. 6 vols. Published by authority of Congress. Phila. 1851-1857. Vol. V. 1855. pp. 560-561.

² *Ibid.* p. 559.

³ *Ibid.* p. 612.

CHAPTER XIII

*The Eighteenth Century Till
the Beginning of the
Revolutionary Period*

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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The Eighteenth Century Till the Beginning of the Revolutionary Period

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE PERIOD ABOUT THE CLOSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND THE opening of the Eighteenth Centuries is one of the most important in the history of America. It marked the collapse of the Puritan theocracy in New England and the rise of the middle-class. Moreover, it gave birth to a more harmonious working together of the various Colonies, and saw the gradual formation of that union which, before the Eighteenth Century was passed, dealt a death blow to English rule. As James Truslow Adams says, "It was in the Eighteenth Century that the American Colonies grew into a nation psychologically as well as politically, and that the American mind took on its distinctive features."¹

For the greater part of the Seventeenth Century the common people of New England, as well as those of the other Colonies, showed little real interest in the doings of their magistrates, or in their religion. As long as they were able to earn their bread and butter they were satisfied. Contrary to the general impression, they were not aflame with any passion for abstract liberty. Says the most authoritative historian of that era in a significant passage in his "The Founding of New England,"

Despite all that has been written of the town-meeting, and the general impression that the average New Englander was almost solely a political and religious animal, there is little evidence to

¹ "Revolutionary New England: 1691-1776," by James Truslow Adams. Boston. 1923. p. 10. See also "Intercolonial Relations on the Eve of the Revolution," by Michael Krause. The Columbia University Press. 1928. The Introduction and the Conclusion.

prove that the ordinary man in that section cared any more about government than the ordinary man in Virginia or Maryland. In fact, at a little later period, the more accurate election returns would seem to indicate that he often cared even less. The small minority that ran the government and the churches was naturally active and vocal. But the fact that four fifths of the people were reasonably content to join no church, and to have no voice in the government, certainly does not argue, in that time and place, any very high degree of political, religious, or intellectual interest as compared with the rest of America. . . . The average man or boy in New England of this period probably looked upon the theory that the main end of the Colony's existence was to make the world safe for the Congregational church, in very much the same way in which those of us who happened to be in France lately found that the average "doughboy" regarded his main end there to be making the world safe for democracy.¹

But at the turn of the Seventeenth Century the average man and boy did become interested. And their interest took on a two-fold aspect: the desire to gain a more efficient administration of colonial affairs from the home government, and the desire to participate in the affairs of their communities regardless of religious affiliations. In both of these struggles they came out victorious. By the new charter of 1691 their right to vote was put solely upon a property qualification, and their government was greatly liberalized. It was, in fact, far more liberal than is the government of its territories by the United States today.² Of greater interest to us is the struggle of the New Englanders with the Puritan theocracy.

At the beginning of the century the Colonies showed a tremendous increase in population, especially the Northern ones. "A mainland population estimated to be about 52,000 in 1650 had become 275,000 by 1700."³ Most of the newcomers, like their predecessors, had emigrated over here to better their economic lots, and so immediately plunged into trade on their arrival. Consequently, the industries of all the Colonies boomed, and money began to be plentiful. Commerce, indeed, took on such strides that not enough labor could be found

¹ "Revolutionary New England: 1691-1776," by James Truslow Adams. Boston. 1923. p. 443. See also "Intercolonial Relations on the Eve of the Revolution," by Michael Krause. The Columbia University Press. 1928. The Introduction and the Conclusion.

² "Revolutionary New England." Adams. p. 449.

³ *Ibid.* p. 30.

among the whites, and thus the trade in African slaves began. "After tentative beginnings, the Negro population grew by leaps and bounds; on the eve of the Revolution it was more than half a million. In five Colonies, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, and Maryland, it equaled or exceeded the whites in number; even in Delaware and Pennsylvania, one fifth of the inhabitants were Negroes. In New York one person in six, and in New England one in fifty sprang from African origins."¹ A good idea of how good business was may be gained by a glance at the shipping industry. "By the middle of the Eighteenth Century, New England was launching seventy new ships every year, New York and Pennsylvania forty-five, and the States of the South forty. Already London ship-builders beside the Thames had begun to complain that their trade was declining, their workmen migrating, their profits disappearing as a result of American competition."²

With this terrific increase in business, the tradespeople became more and more self-conscious, and before long demanded a vote in their government. The Puritan theocracy knew the full import of this demand, so it sent to England its greatest pleader, the Rev. Increase Mather, to argue for the preservation of the religious franchise, but as the charter of 1691 shows, he failed.³ His mission certainly did not help to increase the already dwindling respect of the colonials for the clergy. But they were probably doomed anyway. Even with the best of behavior on the part of the theocracy, its demise would only have been delayed a few years more. The Puritan barbarism, which had inevitably culminated in the witchcraft frenzy in the last decade of the Seventeenth Century, took on a portentous and hideous appearance to the somewhat more enlightened middle-class in the two decades following.⁴ This natural reaction was greatly enhanced by the optimistic attitude which is the usual possession of the frontiersman — the first half of the Eighteenth Century witnessed the first important frontier movement in our history.⁵ Says Dr. Adams, "In a world daily growing richer, safer and pleasanter, in which healthful labor

¹ "The Rise of American Civilization." Vol. I. p. 107.

² *Ibid.* p. 90.

³ See "The Founding of New England." Adams. p. 446 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 454 ff. See also Parrington. Vol. I. pp. 85-86; "The Witchcraft Delusion," edited by S. G. Drake. 3 vols. Roxbury, Mass. 1866. Vol. III. p. 38 ff.; and "Humanism in New England Theology," by G. A. Gordon. Boston. 1920. p. 35 ff.

⁵ An excellent brief discussion of the colonial frontier movement appears in "Revolutionary New England," in the introductory chapter, pp. 11-14. The classic on the entire subject of the influence of the frontier is, of course, that epochal book, "The Frontier in American History," by F. J. Turner. N. Y. 1920.

met with a sure if moderate reward of content and prosperity, it was hard to maintain the belief that most of one's friends and neighbors were doomed to everlasting damnation. . . . The sense of sin tended to evaporate. . . . The pessimistic passivity and determinism of Calvinism, with the whole negative attitude toward life of New England Puritanism, was abandoned by many for the positive activity and optimism of a deistic conception of the universe."¹

Never again did the clergy exercise the power that they had in the Seventeenth Century. The Congregational Church, to be sure, still maintained a privileged position in New England for another hundred years, till 1812 to be precise, but it had actually lost its grip in 1691, with the granting of the new charter. Increase and Cotton Mather knew the meaning of all this. They hurled one sermon after another at the devil of infidelity in their midst. And then came Jonathan Edwards, the greatest of them all. But all in vain. The Devil had won. Not even Yale University, which had been founded in 1701 as a fortress of orthodoxy, could stop the unholy trend of the times. The churches slowly emptied, and preachers were no more given the respect which only a few years before had been their prerogative.² It was with genuine agony of soul that Cotton Mather harked back to former times:

With what Reverence; with what Obedience; with what Concern . . . [did the colonists of old wish] to have them [the ministers] comfortably provided for. . . . How they Rejoyced when they saw them come into their Houses as if Angels of God had appeared.³

The middle-class captured the government, and set the cultural pace for the next three quarters of a century. Emerging bricklayers and carpenters gained control of the judicial and administrative offices, and soon replaced the clergy as the social élite.⁴ Their effect on the culture of the time was little more salubrious than that of the Puritan theocracy. Very likely it was even more baneful. The Puritans at least had a love of books, even if they were books of a low order. But the new middle-class, the first frontiersmen, cared nothing at all for books,

¹ "Revolutionary New England," p. 36. See also Parrington. Vol. I. pp. 86-87.

² "Revolutionary New England." Adams. p. 36.

³ "The Good Old Way," by Cotton Mather. Boston. 1706. p. 70.

⁴ See "The Rise of American Civilization." Vol. I. p. 131; and "Revolutionary New England." p. 31.

or for any other kind of learning or civilized diversion. They were the original Babbitts of America. It is highly probable, as Dr. Adams says, that "in the early years of the Eighteenth Century the people of New England touched their lowest point intellectually and spiritually."¹ The new governing classes were interested solely in making a living and accumulating fortunes. All else was taboo to them. An anonymous author, writing in Boston in 1719, thus expressed the average attitude of his compatriots toward the fine arts:

If some have such Estates, that the yearly Income's enough to maintain them, yet since they have the same Powers and Capacities for Business, and are under the same Supream Law with others, they seem inexcusable if they wrap up their Talent in a Napkin. . . . The Plow-man that raiseth Grain is more serviceable to Mankind, than the Painter who draws only to please the Eye. . . . The Carpenter who builds a good House to defend us from Wind and Weather, is more serviceable than the curious Carver, who employs his Art to please the Fancy. . . . When a People grow numerous, and part are sufficient to raise the necessaries for the whole, then 'tis allowable and laudable, that some should be employed in innocent Arts mor for ornament than Necessity: any innocent business that gets an honest penny, is better than Idleness.²

In the matter of reading, it is true that the New Englanders of the first half of the Eighteenth Century were demanding more secular books than they called for in the previous century. But the actual number of readers did not increase, and there were less than a dozen private libraries in any of the Colonies before 1730.³ As for newspapers, there was practically no censorship after 1730, "and as the press was open to all, the lack of good newssheets must have been due to the bovine apathy of the public and not to the heavy hand of the government."⁴

Thus things continued till about the middle of the century. The Southern and Middle Colonies fared even worse. The former basked in their laziness; when they were active at all they spent nearly all

¹ "Revolutionary New England." p. 35.

² Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 36.

³ "Literary Influences in Colonial Newspapers," by E. C. Cook. The Columbia University Press. 1912. p. 13 ff.

⁴ "Revolutionary New England." p. 34. See also "Intercolonial Relations on the Eve of the Revolution," by Michael Krause. The Columbia University Press. 1928. p. 43 ff.

their energy importing African slaves and superintending their cotton and tobacco fields. They read nothing and wrote nothing. There was more intellectual activity going on in the Middle Colonies, but it was only of a receptive nature. In the field of literature they were barren. Scarcely a single book of any importance was written in all the Colonies in the first half of the Eighteenth Century. The period was, in fact, one of the emptiest in our entire literary history. The little writing that was done was only in New England, and most of it represented the last grasping for power of the dying Puritan theocracy. With the death of Jonathan Edwards it breathed its last, and with his death also New England surrendered its intellectual supremacy.

CHAPTER XIV

New England

*The Theologians—the Collapse
of Puritanism as an Overt
Official Power*

CHAPTER XIV

The Theologians—the Collapse of Puritanism as an Overt Official Power

I. RICHARD MATHER

THE LAST FOUR DEFENDERS OF PURITANISM AS AN OVERT OFFICIAL force in the life of New England were Richard Mather, Increase Mather, Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. Richard Mather, who was the father of Increase and the grandfather of Cotton, was the least influential of the lot, but he it was who brought over to this country the precious Mather seed, which later flowered into Increase and Cotton, the two most learned and at the same time most fanatical Puritans New England has ever produced. Richard was chased out of England by Archbishop Laud for preaching dissenting opinions, so, like many of his predecessors, he fled to this country, and arrived in Boston on August 17, 1635. A year later he became pastor of the church at Dorchester, and preached there till his death on April 22, 1669.

He wrote only eight or nine books — which was really nothing at all compared to the nearly 400 of his grandson Cotton. His greatest claim to remembrance lies in the fact that he collaborated with John Eliot and Thomas Welde in the composition of that atrocity, the Bay Psalm Book. His influence on his two illustrious descendants was immense. He imbued them with a love of learning that was to be one of their life-long boasts. Every possible moment he could squeeze out of his arduous duties as minister and as poet for the Bay Psalm Book he spent in preaching the Word and in reading theology. Cotton relates that

on the morning before he died, he importuned the friends that watched with him, to help him into the room where he thought

his usual works and books expected him. To satisfy his impotency, they began to lead him thither, but finding himself unable to get out of his lodging-room, he said, "I see I am not able. I have not been in my study several days; and is it not a lamentable thing that I should lose so much time?"¹

2. INCREASE MATHER

Richard Mather had six sons, and all of them became famous as preachers, in England or here. The most illustrious of them was the youngest, Increase, next to his son Cotton the most bizarre product of New England Puritanism. He was born in Dorchester, Mass., on June 21, 1639, and "received his name from a very extraordinary increase with which the Colony was at that time favoured."² He was graduated from Harvard at the age of seventeen, and carried off all the Commencement honors with a blistering oration in Latin against the philosophy of Aristotle. Then he went abroad, and studied with distinction at Dublin University. He was only nineteen, but he already "conversed familiarly"³ in Latin, and had read the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New in Greek. He also distinguished himself with high attainments in mathematics, philosophy, history, theology, and rabbinical learning. Because of his dissenting opinions he was forced to leave England, where he did occasional preaching here and there. So he fled to New England, and was ordained pastor of the North Church in Boston on May 27, 1664. He remained in that post for the following sixty-two years, until his death in 1723, at the age of eighty-one.

He possessed a tremendous capacity for work. His son, Cotton, in his biography of him entitled, "Parentator," gives this picture of an ordinary working day of his father's:

In the morning, repairing to his study (where his custom was to sit up very late, even until midnight and perhaps after it) he

¹ "Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New-England; From its First Planting, in the year 1620, unto the year of Our Lord 1698. In Seven Books. By Cotton Mather, D.D., F.R.S., and pastor of the North Church in Boston, New-England." With an introduction and occasional notes by the Rev. Thomas Robbins, D.D., and translations of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin Quotations by Lucius F. Robinson, LL.B. To which is added a Memoir of Cotton Mather by Samuel G. Drake. In 2 vols. Hartford. 1855. Vol. I. p. 453.

² "Remarkable Providence Illustrative of the Earlier Days of American Colonization," by Increase Mather. With an introduction by George Offor. London. 1890. p. viii.

³ *Ibid.* p. viii,

deliberately read a chapter, and made a prayer, and then plied what of reading and writing he had before. At nine o'clock, he came down and read a chapter, and made a prayer with his family. He then returned unto the work of the study. Coming down to dinner, he quickly went up again, and began the afternoon with another prayer. There he went on with the work of the study till the evening. Then with another prayer he again went unto his Father; after which he did more at the work of the study. At nine o'clock, he came down to his family sacrifices. Then he went up again to the work of the study, which anon he concluded with another prayer; and so he betook himself unto his repose.¹

As a preacher he possessed great power of moving his audiences. He had a mighty voice, and often used it "with such a tonitruous cogency that the hearers would be struck with an awe, like what would be produced on the fall of thunderbolts."² He was in the habit of beginning work on his Sunday sermons on the Monday preceding, and kept at them until Friday night. On Saturday he would memorize them, and so prepared he would march into the pulpit with the authority and confidence of a prophet, and deliver his sermon without manuscript. Thus did a leader of the Puritans apply himself to the work of spreading the Kingdom.

Of course, he was a rabid Calvinist, and no breath of the Roger Williams liberalism ever came from him. Says Professor Parrington, "In his professional capacity, Increase Mather was the priest rather than the theologian, a pastor of the flock, an expounder of the creed, rather than a seeker after new light. As a minister his mind was circumscribed by the thinking of John Calvin. He learned nothing from Luther, and was bitterly hostile to those phases of Independency that embodied the more generous Lutheran principles."³ An Old Testament Christian, he joined with John Cotton in demanding that the captured nine-year-old son of King Philip be put to death.⁴ But the people were more merciful, and objected, and thus showed that they were better Christians than their ecclesiastical leaders.⁵ This was the first hint of the coming collapse of the Puritan oligarchy.

It was not long before other signs appeared. In 1691 Increase Mather went specially to London to urge the King to retain the religious franchise in the Colonies, but the demands of the emissaries

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 181.

² *Ibid.* p. 216.

³ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 100.

⁴ "The Founding of New England." Adams. p. 362.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 362.

of the rising industrial class in New England for a property franchise prevailed.¹ At the same time he also "joined vigorously in the proposed work of rejuvenating the New England system by engrafting further shoots from the Presbyterian stock. One of these grafts from the London agreement — the principle of licensing ministerial candidates by the association of ministers, thereby effectively preventing the intrusion of undesired members — established itself on the Congregational system; but another — the principle of associational control of the several churches — was blighted by the attack of John Wise."²

The final blow to Increase Mather, and one of the most powerful to the Puritan oligarchy, came in 1701, when he was forced out of the presidency of Harvard, and the office was conferred upon Leverett, pastor of the Brattle Street Church, which had been organized as a liberal congregation in opposition to the Mathers. This was apparently too much for the Puritan patriarch, and he exclaimed in anguish,

Doubtless there is not any government in the world that has been laid under greater obligations by a greater man than this government has by me. Nevertheless I have received more discouragement in the work of the Lord, by those in government, than by all the men in the world besides. Let not my children put too much confidence in men.³

Increase Mather had plenty of reason to be so discouraged. Says Professor Parrington: "If waves of black pessimism swept over him in those unhappy later years when his ambitions were hopelessly frustrated, there was provocation enough. He had outlived his age and the ablest of the native-born theocrats had become a byword and a mocking amongst the profane of Boston."⁴

He was the author of at least ninety-two works.⁵ The two most

¹ "The Founding of New England." Adams. pp. 448-451.

² Parrington. Vol. I. p. 101. Increase Mather's latest biographer, Professor Kenneth B. Murdock, in his work entitled, "Increase Mather. The Foremost American Puritan" (Harvard University Press, 1925), says of Mather's trip to London that it resulted in "a governmental system which gave New England privileges enjoyed by no other English Colony in America." (p. 393.) He fails to take into consideration the plain historical facts which Adams cites in "The Founding of New England," pp. 362, 448-451. Parrington commits critical mayhem upon the Murdock book in "Main Currents in American Thought." Vol. I. pp. 100-106.

³ Quoted in "Increase Mather. The Foremost American Puritan," by Kenneth B. Murdock. pp. 373-374.

⁴ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 104.

⁵ The best list of these works is to be found in the bibliography compiled by J. L. Sibley in the *Harvard Graduates Magazine*. Vol. I. pp. 438-463.

important of them are his history of New England and his "Remarkable Providences." The full title of the first is: "A Relation of the Troubles which have happened in New-England, By Reason of the Indians there. From the Year 1614, to the Year 1675. Wherein the frequent Conspiracies of the Indians to cutt off the English, and the wonderful providence of God, in disappointing their devices, is declared. Together with an Historical Discorice concerning the Prevalency of Prayer shewing that New Englands late delivrance from the Rage of the Heathen is an eminent Answer of Prayer. By Increase Mather. Teacher of a Church in Boston in New England. Boston; Printed and sold by John Foster. 1677." Until about seventy-five years ago it was greatly relied upon by historians as source material, but later researches have revealed that it is full of serious errors of fact. For this Mather is probably not wholly to blame. Says Mr. Samuel G. Drake, perhaps the leading authority on the historical works of the two later Mathers:

He does not seem to have profited at all by correspondence, and not much from Conversation with those living in the time of the war [King Philip's War], or their descendants. In his detail of transactions he is provokingly silent respecting those who performed them. This was a serious fault of nearly all writers of history of that as well as a previous age. Often no name is mentioned but that of a leader of the expedition; and thus oblivion hangs over the memory of those who exposed their lives to all the dangers of a most dangerous service.¹

Mather's "Remarkable Providences Illustrative of the Earlier Days of American Colonization" is a most amazing book. It presents the spectacle of one of the most learned minds of his time spending years upon years compiling what were no more than old wives' tales, and trying to dredge theological and practical meanings out of them. Professor Murdock says of Increase Mather that "as a scientific student . . . he was one of the very first in New England,"² but he offers no evidence whatever that he possessed the slightest trace of the scientific spirit. Increase Mather gives him the lie himself: he apparently regarded "Remarkable Providences" as his most important work.

¹ Samuel G. Drake edition of the "Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England." Albany, N. Y. 1864. pp. viii-ix.

² "Increase Mather. The Foremost American Puritan." by Kenneth B. Murdock. p. 395.

The book deals with "remarkable sea-deliverances," "some other remarkable preservations," "remarkables about thunder and lightning," "demons and possessed persons," "deaf and dumb persons," "apparitions," and, in a chapter by themselves, "some remarkables at Norwich in New England." "Remarkables about thunder and lightning" seem to have been the greatest concern of Mather, and he devoted the most space to them. Here are two instances:

In July, 1654, a man whose name was Partridge, esteemed a very godly person, at Salisbury in New England, was killed with thunder and lightning, his house being set on fire thereby, and himself with others endeavouring the quenching of it, by a second crack of thunder with lightning (he being at the door of his house), was struck dead, and never spake more. There were ten other persons also that were struck and lay for dead at the present, but they all revived, excepting Partridge. Some that viewed him report that there were two holes (like such as were made with shot) found in his clothes and skin. One side of his shirt and body were scorched, and not the other. His house, though (as was said) set on fire by the lightning in divers places, was not burnt down, but preserved by an abundance of rain falling upon it.¹

. . . in the latter end of May [1666], Samuel Ruggles, of Rocksborough in New England, going with a loaden cart, was struck with lightning. He did not hear the thunder-clap, but was by the force of the lightning, e're he was aware, carried over his cattle about ten feet distance from them. Attempting to rise up, he found that he was not able to stand upon his right leg, for his right foot was become limber, and would bend any way; feeling as if it had no bone in it; nevertheless, he made a shift with the use of one leg to get to his cattle (being an horse and two oxen), which were all killed by the lightning. He endeavoured to take off the yোক from the neck of one of the oxen, but then he perceived that his thumb and two fingers in one hand were stupified that he could not stir them; they looked like cold clay, the blood clear gone out of that part of his hand; but by rubbing his wounded leg and hand, blood and life came into them again. As he came home, pulling of his stocking, he found that on the inside of his right leg (which smarted much) the hair was quite burnt off, and it looked red; just over his ankle his stocking was singed

¹ George Offor edition. London. 1890. pp. 51-52.

on the inside, but not on the outside, and there near upon twenty marks, about as big as pins heads, which the lightning had left thereon; likewise the shoe on his left foot was by the lightning struck off his foot, and carried above two rods from him. On the upper leather, at the end of the shoe, there five holes burnt through it, bigger than those which are made with duck shot. As for the beasts that were slain, the hair upon their skins was singed, so that one might perceive that the lightning had run winding and turning strangely upon their bodies, leaving little marks no bigger than corns of gun-powder behind it. There was in the car a chest, which the lightning pierced through, as also through a quire of paper and twelve napkins, melting some pewter dishes that were under them.¹

Thunders and lightning were of special import as evidence of God's power, so Mather devoted a special chapter to metaphysical speculation on them. It is entitled "Some Philosophical Meditations." The subtitles are these:

Concerning Antipathies and Sympathies. Of the loadstone. Of the nature and wonderful effects of lightning. That thunder storms are often caused by Satan, and sometimes by good angels. Thunder is the voice of God, and, therefore, to be dreaded. All places in the habitable world are subject to it more or less. No amulets can preserve men from being hurt thereby. The miserable estate of wicked men upon this account, and the happiness of the righteous, who may be above all disquieting fears with respect unto such terrible accidents.²

At the beginning of the chapter entitled, "Concerning Things Preternatural which Have Hapned in New England," Mather says:

Inasmuch as things which are preternatural, and not accomplished without diabolical operation, do more rarely happen, it is pity but that they should be observed. Several accidents of that kind have hapned in New-England, which I shall faithfully relate, so far as I have been able to come unto the knowledge of them.³

And then he relates this typical "preternatural":

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 53-55.

² *Ibid.* pp. 56-57.

³ *Ibid.* p. 96.

Another thing which caused a noise in this country, and wherein Satan had undoubtedly a great influence, was that which hapned at Groton. There was a maid in that town (one Elizabeth Knap) who in the moneth of October anno 1671, was taken after a very strange manner, sometimes weeping, sometimes laughing, sometimes roaring hideously, with violent motions and agitations of her body, crying out "Money, money," &c. In November following, her tongue for many hours together was drawn like a semi-circle up to the roof of her mouth, not to be removed, though some tried with their fingers to do it. Sixe men were scarce able to hold her in some of her fits, but she would skip about the house yelling and looking with a most frightful aspect. December 17: Her tongue was drawn out of her mouth to an extraordinary length; and now a dæmon began manifestly to speak in her. Many words were spoken seeming to proceed out of her throat, when her mouth was shut; sometimes with her mouth wide open, without the use of any of the organs of speech. The things then uttered by the Devil were chiefly railings and revilings of Mr. Willard (who was at that time a worthy and faithful pastor to the church in Groton). Also the dæmon belched forth most horrid and nefandous blasphemies, exalting himself above the Most High. After this she was taken speechless for some time. One thing more is worthy of remark concerning this miserable creature. She cried out in some of her fits, that a woman (one of her neighbours) appeared to her, and was the cause of her affliction. The person thus accused was a very sincere, holy woman, who did hereupon, with the advice of friends, visit the poor wretch; and though she was in one of her fits, having her eyes shut, when the innocent person impeached by her came in, yet could she (so powerful were Satans operations upon her) declare who was there, and could tell the touch of that woman from any one else. But the gracious party, thus accused and abused by a malicious devil, prayed earnestly with and for the possessed creature; after which she confessed that Satan had deluded her, making her believe evil of her good neighbour without any cause. Nor did she after that complain of any apparition or disturbance from such an one. Yea, she said, that the devil had himself, in the likeness and shape of divers, tormented her, and then told her it was not he but they that did it.¹

¹ George Offor edition. London. 1890. pp. 99-101.

This is the sort of stuff that was written by a man, of whom Professor Murdock gloatingly says, "They [the people that mourned him] . . . would have been at a loss to find any American of his generation more worthy to be called a literary leader. . . . No American author before John Wise and Benjamin Franklin rivalled him in the writing of English. . . . His best pages and last discourses from the pulpit are not surpassed by any but the Seventeenth Century English writers whom we call 'great' in literary history."¹ As for Mather's ridiculous "Remarkable Providences," Dr. Murdock grows quite excited about it: "There is imagination everywhere in his visualization of Heaven, of Hell, of angels, of devils, and in his ecstatic feeling of communion with God and Christ through prayer. No dreamer of dreams, no poet wrapt in mystic visions, ever did more than Mather did every time he knelt to wrestle with his sins, in passionate pleas for forgiveness and protestations for the eternal fountain heads of his faith."²

This, I fear, is all nonsense. Mather did possess a relatively clear style, but it was no better than that of Michael Wigglesworth, or John Cotton, or Thomas Hooker, or Thomas Shepard. To mention his name in the same breath with those of the Elizabethan masters is utterly preposterous. He was as far removed from them as William Jennings Bryan was from Havelock Ellis. The facts about him are very plain, and no amount of sophistry, even of the Harvard variety, can hide them. Mather was a superstitious, rabid, intolerant Puritan. He did love learning, but it was learning of a wrong sort. His influence on New England culture was immense, but nearly wholly baneful. Perhaps his chief claim to remembrance is that he made it so much harder for the Roger Williamses and John Wises to realize their liberal, democratic ideas.

3. COTTON MATHER

Cotton Mather is, as Professor Parrington says, "an attractive subject for the psychoanalyst."³ He wrote at least 382 books and pamphlets, and his average of sermons a year was 400. He was born on February 12, 1663. His mother was Amelia Cotton, the only

¹ "Increase Mather . . .," by Kenneth B. Murdock, pp. 390-393.

² *Ibid.* pp. 393-394.

³ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 107.

daughter of the celebrated Rev. John Cotton, and he was given his first name in memory of his grandfather. At a very early age he already showed signs of the great man that he was to be. When only twelve he was able to read and write Latin, and even speak it. At the age of sixteen he was graduated from Harvard with the highest honors. This increased his natural vanity, and forever after he could not rid himself of the feeling that he was something of a supernatural being. At eighteen he took another degree at Harvard, the master's, and again distinguished himself, this time with a powerful oration on "the divine origin of the Hebrew points." At about the same time he began his colossal literary labors. He had already drawn systems of the various sciences, and had written lengthy criticisms upon all the books which he had read, which included Homer, Isocrates, and several other classical and Continental authors. In 1684, when only twenty-two, he was made associate minister of the North Church in Boston. At the death of his father, he was made chief minister, and held that post until his death in 1728. He married three times, and had nine children, but only two of them reached maturity. His third wife went insane shortly after she married him.

Cotton Mather's abilities as a scholar were the marvel even of his own day. He knew ten or eleven languages, including French, German, Greek, Latin, and several of the Indian languages, and wrote in every one of them. He had the largest private library in Boston. All intruders into his study were warned beforehand by the legend inscribed in capitals above his door: "Be Short." He was always at work. As one of the preface writers to the "Magnalia" said of him, "Play is his toil, and work his recreation."¹

Thomas Prince, the father of American bibliography, wrote that he was

a Person of a wonderful quick apprehension, tenacious memory, lively Fancy, ready Invention, unwearied Industry: of vast Improvements in Knowledge. . . . He was a wonderful Improver of Time: and 'tis almost amazing how much He had read and studied — How much he has wrote and published — How much he corresponded abroad. . . . How many Languages, Histories, Arts and Sciences, both ancient and modern He was familiarly vers'd in — What a vast Amassment of Learning He had grasp'd in his Mind, from all sorts of Writings. . . . His printed Writ-

¹ Samuel G. Drake edition of the "Magnalia," Vol. I, p. 19.

ings so full of Piety and various Erudition, his vast correspondence, and the continual Reports of Travellers who had conversed with him, had spread his Reputation into other Countries: And when about Fourteen Years ago I travelled abroad, I cou'd not but admire to what Extent his Fame had reached. . . . He could not be troubled with any (books) but those that were likely to bring him something New, and so increase his knowledge. In two or three minutes turning thro a Volumn, he cou'd easily tell whether it would make Additions to the Store of his Ideas. If it cou'd not, He quickly laid it by: If otherwise he read it . . . perusing those parts only that represented something Novel, which he Pencil'd as he went along, and at the end reduc'd the Substance to his Common places, to be reviewed at Leisure; and all this with wonderful Celerity. . . . As he increased in Years, the less time he had occasion to expand in running thro' an Author; till at length there were but few Books published that would take him much to read." ¹

During his lifetime Cotton Mather was unquestionably the leading Puritan divine on this continent. The esteem in which he was held in his own Boston is well attested by the following obituary notice, which appeared in the *New England Weekly Journal* for February 26, 1728.

On Monday last the Remains of the Late very Reverend and Learned Dr. Cotton Mather, who deceas'd on Tuesday the 13th Instant, to the great Loss and Sorrow of this Town and Country, were very honourably interred. His Reverend Colleague in deep Mourning, with the Brethren of the Church, walking in a body before the Corpse. The six first Ministers of the Boston Lecture supported the Pall. Several Gentlemen of the bereaved Flock took their turns to bear the Coffin. After which followed, first the bereaved Relatives in Mourning; then his Honour the Lieutenant Governour, the Honourable his Majesty's Council, and House of Representatives; and then a large Train of Ministers, Justices, Merchants, Scholars and other principal Inhabitants, both men and Women. The streets were crouded with People, and the windows fill'd with Sorrowful Spectators, all the way to

¹ Thomas Prince. Preface to Samuel Mather's "Life of Cotton Mather." Boston, 1729. pp. 1-4.

the Burying Place: where the Corpse was deposited in a Tomb belonging to the worthy Family.¹

Ecclesiastically, Cotton Mather was, of course, a Puritan theocrat of the most fanatical sort. In this respect he went even further than his father. Says Professor Parrington, "There was not a grain of liberalism in his make-up. His antipathy to all popular movements was deep-rooted, for he knew no other political philosophy than that of the obsolete theocracy in which he grew up. . . . Though he might play to popular prejudices to serve his political ends, he had scant regard for popular rights. The highest privilege of the New England people, he believed, was the privilege of being ruled by the godly."²

He took a leading part in the witchcraft craze, and was, in fact, one of its instigators. One of his most prominent apologists, Professor Kenneth B. Murdock, has lately tried to whitewash this chapter of his career. He says: "His writings on witchcraft, and the contemporary records, prove him to have been not less but more humane than his contemporaries. Scholars have demonstrated that his advice to the witch judges was always that they should be more cautious in accepting evidence against those who were haled before them. His point of view was consistently that of a man as eager to spare the innocent as to condemn the guilty. . . . The spectral Cotton Mather of myth, thirsty for blood and stirring up the people to deeds of violence, vanishes before the facts."³ Unluckily, Professor Murdock does not mention any of the "scholars" or any of the "evidence." The fact is that there is no such evidence. Cotton Mather *was* "thirsty for blood and

¹ Quoted in the Drake edition of the "Magnalia." Vol. I. p. xxxiv.

² Parrington. Vol. I. p. 113.

³ "Selections from Cotton Mather," edited with an introduction, by Kenneth B. Murdock. N. Y. 1926. pp. xv-xvi.

Barrett Wendell was one of the most competent literary critics of his day. He was the author of the most authoritative study of Cotton Mather in print. It is entitled, "Cotton Mather. The Puritan Priest," and was published in New York in 1891. On pages 88 and 98-99 he admits the part that Cotton Mather played in the witchcraft delusion, and yet finds it very difficult to censure him for it. Incredible as it may appear, the following is a verbatim quotation of what he says on this point: "In such a controversy, it is the man of the future that the future holds right. In the time that has passed since the Mathers and Calef have lain in their graves, the world has seen an age of reason, and not of imaginative emotion. And most of those who have concerned themselves about these dead men have deemed Calef all in the right and the Mathers foolish, if not worse. But did Calef see all? Is there, after all, in a great epidemic of superstition nothing beyond what those who escape contagion perceive? Are we not today beginning to guess that there may be in heaven and earth more things than are yet dreamt of in your philosophy? If there be, it may in the end prove the verdict of men that neither honest Calef nor the honest Mathers saw all that passed before their eyes; but that each in his own way caught a glimpse of truth, and that each believed that all the truth was comprised in the bit he saw." (pp. 105-106.)

stirring up the people to deeds of violence." The two most authoritative historians of that period, James Truslow Adams and Professor Parrington,¹ have no doubt about the matter. He was the most fanatical of the witch-hangers, and held out against the unfortunate men and women long after the public fury had subsided.²

He was a member of the Royal Society. He was one of the few brave souls to advocate inoculation against smallpox, thus inviting the terrific denunciation of the Boston mob. Yet he was extremely gullible in nearly all other directions. He attached the greatest scientific and theological importance to all the old wives' tales current in his time, and with tremendous diligence collected them into one of his most bizarre books, "Wonders of the Invisible World," which went even further, in its way, than his father's equally famous "Illustrious Providences."

The man was undoubtedly an egomaniac. In his diary, most of which is in Latin, there is this entry at the beginning of his twenty-third year, which Professor Wendell has transcribed into English thus:

A strange and memorable thing. After outpourings of prayer, with the utmost fervor and fasting, there appeared an Angel, whose face shone like the noonday sun. His features were as those of man, and beardless; his head was encircled by a splendid tiara; on his shoulders were wings; his garments were white and shining; his robes reached to his ankles; and about his loins was a belt not unlike the girdles of the peoples of the East. And this Angel said that he was sent by the Lord Jesus to bear a clear answer to the prayers of a certain youth, and to bear back his words in reply. Many things this Angel said which it is not fit should be set down here. But among other things not to be forgotten he declared that the fate of this youth should be to find full expression for what in him was best; . . . And in particular this Angel spoke of the influence his branches should have, and of the books this youth should write and publish, not only in America but in Europe. And he added certain special prophecies of the great works this youth should do for the Church of Christ in the revolutions that are now at hand. Lord Jesus! What is the mean-

¹ "The Founding of New England." Adams. p. 452 ff. Parrington. Vol. I. p. 106 ff.

² "History of America. From the Discovery of the Continent," by George Bancroft. N. Y. 1890. Vol. II. p. 50 ff.

ing of this marvel? From the wiles of the Devil, I beseech thee, deliver and defend Thy most unworthy servant.¹

Mather was "the *principal Ornament* of this Country," as the *New England Weekly* said of him in the first of its two obituaries on him, on February 19, 1728. But not for the entire duration of his life. At the turn of the century "a reaction set in, and the sober sense of the community set itself against the ravings and goadings of the more fanatical clergy and church members."² In 1700 a merchant, one Robert Calef, ridiculed Mather by publishing in London a book entitled, "More Wonders of the Invisible World." It was quickly smuggled into this country, and several of Mather's friends immediately wrote a book in answer. "Some few Remarks upon a Scandalous Book written by one Robert Calef." But it fell flat. The day of the Mathers was coming to an end. The Puritan warrior, however, did not surrender so soon. He appealed to the secular authorities to come to his help; but he was either ignored completely or rebuked politely. On September 2, 1709, Governor Dudley went so far as to fail to invite him to a conference of the neighborhood ministers—a thing undreamt of ten years previous. On that day Puritanism as an open force in New England life began its death rattle.³

Cotton Mather was, indeed, what Professor Barrett Wendell has called him, "the most voluminous of American writers."⁴ Very likely he was the most voluminous writer who ever lived. The man's industry was almost incredible. He published nearly 400 books and pamphlets, and left enough in manuscript to fill about 200 additional volumes.⁵ Here are the titles of his more important works:

"*Magnalia Christi Americana*; or, the Ecclesiastical History of New-England; From its first Planting, in the year 1620, unto the year of Our Lord 1698."

"*Angel Bethesda*," a treatise on medicine.

"*Curiosa Americana*," a collection of notes on New England

¹ "Cotton Mather. The Puritan Priest," by Barrett Wendell. N. Y. 1891. p. 64.

² "Revolutionary New England." Adams. p. 455.

³ There is an excellent discussion of this point in Bancroft. Vol. II. p. 258 ff. Also in "Cotton Mather. The Puritan Priest," by Barrett Wendell. p. 300 ff.

⁴ "A New England Puritan," by Barrett Wendell. The *Quarterly Review*. London. January, 1913. Vol. 218. p. 36.

⁵ Professor George Lyman Kittredge discusses some of them, primarily Mather's writings on inoculation for smallpox, in "Some More Works of Cotton Mather," February, 1912, Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceed. Vol. 45. 1911-1912. pp. 419-479.

natural history, which he sent to England, and for which he was made F. R. S. in 1713.

The Diary of Cotton Mather. This is mainly a record of spiritual experiences, not of fact. It does not exist in the original, but only in digests, which he himself apparently made toward the end of his life.

"The Holy Walk and Glorious Translation of Blessed Enoch." A sermon.

"A Poem Dedicated to the Memory of the Reverent and Excellent Mr. Urian Oakes."

"The Present State of New England."

"The Life of the Renowned John Eliot." This was later included in Book III of the "Magnalia."

"The Short History of New England."

"Bonifacius." This is usually known as "Essays to do Good."

"Psalterium Americanum." A blank verse translation of the Psalms from the original Hebrew.

"The Christian Philosopher: A Collection of the Best Discoveries in Nature, with Religious Improvements."

"Parentator. Memoirs of remarkables in the life and the death of the ever-memorable Dr. Increase Mather. Who expired, August 23, 1723."

"The Wonders of the Invisible World; being an account of the tryals of several witches lately executed in New-England; and of several remarkable curiosities therein occurring."

"New-England judged, by the spirit of the Lord. In two parts. First, containing a brief relation of the sufferings of the people call'd Quakers in New-England from the time of their first arrival there, in the year 1656, to the year 1660. . . . Second part, being a farther relation of the . . . sufferings of the . . . Quakers in New-England, continued from anno 1660, to anno 1665."

"Ratio Disciplinae." An account of the discipline in New England churches.

"Manductio ad Ministerium: Directions for a Candidate of the Ministry."

"Biblia Americana." A commentary on the Bible that, because of its enormous bulk, has never yet been published.

By far the most important book that Mather wrote was the "Magnalia." It is one of the literary wonders of all time. There are a frenzy and a confusion and a pedantry and a fanaticism in it that make one gasp and marvel that an apparently sane human being should have

written it. There are, indeed, whole pages and even chapters that are either absolutely unintelligible or nearly so. And yet it will undoubtedly live as long as American literature lives. First, it is full of historical and biographical material that cannot be obtained elsewhere, and second, better than anything else written at the time, it portrays the religious and cultural life of that period accurately and even dramatically. But the literary value of the book is nil.

Despite its reputation as a history, the "Magnalia" is nothing of the sort. Rather it is a historical miscellany, full of omissions and gross errors of fact.¹ In large part it is composed of matter previously published by Mather. He began work on the book in 1693, and probably finished it in 1697. It was first published in London in 1702 in a one-volume edition of 794 pages; the actual text, however, took up only 788 pages. The first American edition, curiously enough for so important a book and by so distinguished a man, did not appear till 1820 when, under the editorship of "T. R.," it was published in Hartford, Conn., in two volumes. The second American edition appeared in 1855, and was also in two volumes. On the title page of the first volume appears this legend: "With an introduction and occasional notes, by the Rev. Thomas Robbins, D.D. and translations of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Quotations, by Lucius F. Robinson, LL.B. To which is added, A Memoir of Cotton Mather, by Samuel G. Drake, M.A." No other edition has appeared since.

The whole work is divided into seven books. The first deals with the settlement of New England, the second with the lives of the Governors, the third with the biographies of the ministers, the fourth with the story of Harvard and some of its graduates, the fifth with the history of the Congregational church in the Colonies, the sixth with "remarkable providences," and the seventh with various disturbances in the churches.

For a preface there are six laudatory poems by five of the leading divines of the time. The first is entitled "A Prefatory Poem,

¹ That the historical value of the "Magnalia" is very great all historians agree, but the latest research has shown it to be full of serious errors, both of omission and commission. Not even his most persistent defenders have failed to overlook this point. ("Selections from Cotton Mather," edited by Kenneth B. Murdock. N. Y. 1926. p. xxxv and p. xlv; "Cotton Mather. The Puritan Priest," by Barrett Wendell. p. 300 ff.) However, when the first American edition of the "Magnalia" appeared in Hartford in 1820, the author of the critical introduction, "T. R.," was of a different opinion. He said: "The work now presented to the American public contains the history of the Fathers of New-England, for about eighty years, in its most authentic form." (The "Magnalia," with an introduction by Samuel G. Drake. Hartford. 1855. 2 vols. Reprint of introduction by "T. R." to 1820 edition. Vol. I. p. v.)

on that excellent book, entitled *MAGNALIA CHRISTI AMERICANA*: Written by the Rev. Mr. Cotton Mather, pastor of a church at Boston, New-England." It is by the Rev. Mr. Nicholas Noyes. It is in English, as is the one by the Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, minister of Hartford. All the others—by Benjamin Thompson; I. Danforth, a minister of Dorchester; Grinadal Rawson, pastor of Malden; and Henry Seljins, pastor of a Dutch Reformed church in New York—are in Latin. The most ambitious of the latter is that by the Rev. Henry Seljins. The title is: "In Jesu Christi Magnalia Americana Digesta in Septem Libros Per Magnum Doctissimumque Virum, D. Cottonum Matherum, J. Christi Servum, Ecclesiaeque Americanae Bostoniensis Ministerum Pium Et Dissertissimum." (A poem, concerning the mighty works of Jesus Christ in America, arranged in seven books, by that great and most learned man, Mr. Cotton Mather, a servant of Jesus Christ, and the pious and most eloquent minister of a church at Boston in America.)¹

Mather's purpose in writing the "Magnalia," in his own words, was this:

I write the *Wonders* of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the Depravations of *Europe*, to the *American Strand*; And, assisted by the Holy Author of that RELIGION, I do, with all Conscience of *Truth*, required therein by Him, who is the *Truth* it self, report the *Wonderful Displays* of His Infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Faithfulness, wherewith His Divine Providence hath *Irradiated* an *Indian Wildness*.

I first introduce the *Actors* that have in a more exemplary manner, served those *Colonies*; and give *Remarkable Occurrences*, in the exemplary *Lives* of many *Magistrates*, and of more *Ministers*, who so *Lived*, as to leave unto Posterity *Examples* worthy of *Everlasting Remembrance*.

I add hreunto the *Notables* of the only *Protestant University*, that even *shone* in that Hemisphere of the *New World*; with particular Instances of *Criolians*, in our *Biography*, provoking the *whole World* with *Virtuous Objects* of Emulation.

I introduce, then, the *Actions* of a more Eminent Importance, that have signalized those *Colonies*: Whether the *Establishments*, directed by their *Synods*; with a Rich Variety of *Synodical*

¹ All of these six poems appear at the beginning of Vol. I of the Samuel G. Drake edition of the "Magnalia." pp. 19-23. All the Latin poems appear in the original and also in translation.

witched with the *Ordinary*, what usually becomes of him? He is a *gone Man*; and when he comes to Die, he'll cry out as many have done, *Ale-Houses are Hell-Houses! Ale-Houses are Hell-Houses!* But let the *Owners* of those *Houses* also now hear our Counsels. *Oh! Harken to me, that God may harken to you another Day!* It is an *Honest*, and *Lawful*, tho' it be not a very *Desireable* Employment, that you have undertaken: You may *Glorifie* the Lord Jesus Christ in your Employment if you will, and benefit the Town considerably. There was a very godly Man that was an *Innkeeper*, and a great Minister of God could say to that Man, in 3 *John* 2. *Thy Soul Prospereth*. O let it not be said of you, since you are fallen into this Employment, *Thy Soul withereth!* It is thus with too many: Especially, when they that get a *License* perhaps to Sell Drink out of Doors, do stretch their *License* to Sell within Doors. Those *Private Houses*, when once a Professor of the Gospel comes to *Steal* a Living out of them, it commonly precipitates them into abundance of wretchedness and confusion. But I pray God assist you that keep *Ordinaries*, to keep the *Commandments* of God in them. There was an *Inn* at *Bethlehem* where the Lord JESUS CHRIST was to be met withal. Can *Boston* boast of many such? Alas, too ordinarily it may be said, *There is no Room for him in the Inn!* My Friends, let me beg it of you, banish the *unfruitful Works of Darkness* from your *Houses*, and then the *Sun of Righteousness* will shine upon them. Don't countenance *Drunkenness*, *Revelling*, and *Mis-spending* of precious Time in your *Houses*: Let none have the *Snares of Death* laid for them in your *Houses*. You'll say, *I shall Starve then!* I say, *better Starve than Sin*: But you *shall not*. It is the Word of the Most High, *Trust in the Lord, and do Good, and verily thou shalt be fed*. And is not *Peace of Conscience*, with a *Little*, better than those Riches, that will shortly melt away, and then run like Scalding Metal down the very Bowels of they Soul? ¹

If Mather was eloquent in his denunciation of what he termed evils, he was equally eloquent in his praise of those whom he regarded as

¹ This excerpt is from an address, the full title of which is, "The Boston Ebenezer. Some Historical Remarks on the State of Boston, the Chief Town of New-England, and of the English, America. With Some Agreeable Methods for Preserving and Promoting the Good State of That, as well as any other Town in the like Circumstances." It is included in the "Magnalia" as a sort of appendix to Book One. (Drake edition of the "Magnalia." Vol. I. pp. 90-104. This excerpt, pp. 100-101.) It was delivered "At Boston Lecture, 7d. 2m. 1698."

worthy ministers of God. Here, for example, is how he felt about the Rev. Mr. Ralph Partridge, lately departed this world:

When *David* was driven from his Friends into the Wilderness, he made this Pathetical Representation of his Condition. 'Twas as when one doth hunt a Partridge in the Mountains. Among the many worthy Persons who were persecuted into an *American* Wilderness, for their Fidelity to the Ecclesiastical Kingdom of our true *David*, there was one that bore the Name, as well as the State, of an hunted Partridge. What befel him, was as *Bede* saith of what was done by *Felix*, *Juxta nominis sui Sacramentum*.

This was Mr. *Ralph Partridge*, who for no Fault but the Delicacy of his good Spirit, being distress'd by the Ecclesiastical Setters, had no Defence, neither of *Beak*, nor *Claw*, but a Flight over the Ocean.

The Place where he took covert, was the Colony of *Plymouth*, and the Town of *Duxbury* in that Colony.

This Partridge had not only the Innocence of the Dove, conspicuous in his blameless and pious Life, which made him very acceptable in his Conversation; but also the Loftiness of an Eagle, in the great Soar of his intellectual Abilities. There are some Interpreters, who understanding Church Officers by the living Creatures, in the Fourth Chapter of the *Apocalypse*, will have the Teacher to be intended by the Eagle there, for his quick Insight into remote and hidden things. The Church of *Duxbury* had such an Eagle in their Partridge, when they enjoy'd such a Teacher.

By the same Token, when the Platform of Church-Discipline was to be compos'd, the Synod at Cambridge appointed three Persons to draw up each of them, *A Model of Church-Government, according to the Word of God*, unto the end, that out of those, the Synod might form what should be found most agreeable; which three Persons were Mr. Cotton, and Mr. Mather, and Mr. Partridge. So that in the Opinion of that Reverend Assembly, this Person did not come far behind the first three, for some of his Accomplishments.

After he had been Forty Years a faithful and painful Preacher of the Gospel, rarely, if ever, in all that while interrupted in his Work, by any Bodily Sickness, he dy'd in a good Old Age about the Year 1658.

There was one singular instance of a *weaned Spirit*, whereby he signalized himself unto the Churches of God. That was this: There was a time, when most of the Ministers in the Colony of *Plymouth*, left the Colony, upon the Discouragement which the want of a *competent Maintenance* among the needy and froward Inhabitants, gave unto them. Nevertheless, Mr. *Partridge* was, notwithstanding the *Paucity* and *Poverty* of his Congregation, so afraid of being any thing that look'd like a *Bird wandring from his Nest*, that he remained with this poor People, till he *took Wing* to become a *Bird of Paradise*, along with the winged *Seraphim of Heaven*.

Epitaphium

Avolavit! _____¹

Excellent as the medium of prose was for the description of the good qualities of so noble a man as the Rev. Ralph Partridge, it proved wholly inadequate when it came to celebrating properly the flight to Heaven of so superhuman a being as the Rev. Mr. William Thompson. Mather was forced to resort to poetry.

On the Bright and Dark Side of that American Pillar, the Reverend Mr. William Thompson; Pastor of the Church at Braintree. Who triumphed on Dec. 10, 1666.

*But may a rural pen try to set forth
Such a great father's ancient grace and worth!
I undertake a no less arduous theme,
Than the old sages found the Chaldee dream.
'Tis more than Tythes of a profound respect,
That must be paid such a Melchizedeck.*

*Oxford this light, with tongues and arts doth trim;
And then his northern town doth challenge him.
His time and strength he center'd there in this:
To do good work and be what now he is.
His fulgent virtues there, and learned strains.
Tall, comely presence, life unsoil'd with stains,
Things most on WORTHIES, in their stories writ,
Did him to moves in orbs of service fit.*

¹ Samuel G. Drake edition of the "Magnalia." Vol. I. Book III. Chapter XI. pp. 404-405.

*Things more peculiar yet, my muse, intend,
Say stranger things than these; so weep and end.*

*Apollyon owing him a cursed spleen
Who an Apollos in the church had been,
Dreading his traffick here would be undone
By num'rous proselytes he daily won,
Accus'd him of imaginary faults,
And push'd him down so into dismal vaults:
Vaults, wher he kept long Ember-weeks of grief,
Till Heaven alarm'd sent him in relief.
Then was a Daniel in the lions' den,
A man — oh, how belov'd of God and men!
By his bed-side an Hebrew sword there lay,
With which at last he drove the devil away.
Quakers too durst not bear his keen replies,
But fearing it half drawn, the trembler flies.
Like Lazarus, new rais'd from death, appears
The saint that had been dead for many years.
Our Nehemiah said, " Shall such as I
Desert my flock, and like a coward fly!"
Long had the churches begg'd the saint's release;
Releas'd at last, he dies in glorious peace.
The night is not so long, but phosphor's ray
Approaching glories doth on high display.
Faith's eye in him discern'd the morning star,
His heart leap'd; sure the sun cannot be far.
In extasies of joy, he ravish'd cries,
" Love, love the Lamb, the Lamb!" in whom he dies.¹*

Mather's " Wonders of the Invisible World " was first published in Boston in 1692. It gives an excellent picture of what was going on in the best minds of the time, and shows, perhaps better than anything else could show, what Calvinism can do to a people, to its culture, to its private and public psychologies, to its *mores*, and to its dreaming. I quote three typical excerpts from it. In the first Mather proves to his own satisfaction that witches exist:

That there is a *Devil*, is a thing Doubted by none but such as are under the Influences of the *Devil*. For any to deny the Being of a

¹ Samuel G. Drake edition of the "Magnalia." Vol. I. Book III. Chapter XI. p. 440.

Devil must be from an Ignorance or Profaneness, worse than *Diabolical*. *A Devil*. What is *that*? We have a Definition of the Monster, in *Eph. 6.12. A Spiritual Wickedness*, that is *A wicked Spirit*. A Devil is a *Fallen Angel*, an Angel *Fallen* from the Fear and Love of God, and from all Celestial Glories; but *Fallen* to all manner of Wretchedness and Cursedness. . . .

First, then, 'Tis to be granted; the *Devils* are so many, that some Thousands, can sometimes at once apply themselves to vex one Child of Man. It is said, in *Mark 5.15, He that was Possessed with the Devil, had the Legion*. Dreadful to be spoken! A *Legion* consisted of Twelve Thousand Five Hundred People; And we see that in one Man or two, so many *Devils* can be spared for a Garrison. As the Prophet cried out, *Multitudes, Multitudes, in the Valley of Decision!* So I say, *There are multitudes, multitudes in the valley of Destruction, where the Devils are!* . . .

Secondly, 'Tis to be supposed, that there is a sort of Arbitrary, even Military Government, among the *Devils*. This is intimated, when in *Mar. 5.9. The unclean Spirit said, My name is Legion*: they are such a Discipline as *Legions* used to be. Hence we read about, *The Prince of the powers of the Air*: Our *Air* has a *Power*, or an Army of Devils in the *High Places* of it; and these Devils have a *Prince* over them, who is *King over the Children of Pride*. 'Tis probable, That the Devil, who was the Ringleader of that mutinous and rebellious Crew, which first shook off the Authority of God, is now the General of those Hellish Armies; Our Lord, that Conquered him, has told us the Name of him; 'tis *Belzebub*; 'tis he that is *the Devil*, and the rest are *his Angels*, or his *Souldiers*. Think on vast Regiments of cruel and bloody *French Dragoons*, with an intendent over them, overrunning a pillaged Neighbourhood, and you will think a little, what the Constitution among the *Devils* is.

Thirdly, 'tis to be supposed, that some *Devils* are more peculiarly *Commission'd*, and perhaps *Qualify'd* for some Countries, while others are for others. . . .¹

The next two quotations are from the evidence concerning two witches who were finally executed, as gathered by Dr. Mather. This is from the trial of Bridget Bishop:

¹ Mather's "Wonders of the Invisible World." Edition of John Russell Smith. London. 1862. pp. 42-45.

Bridget Bishop, to help to take down the Cellar-wall of the old House wherein she formerly lived, they did in holes of the said old Wall, find several Poppets, made up of Rags and Hog-bristles, with headless Pins in them, the Points being outward; whereof she could give no Account to the Court, that was reasonable or tolerable. . . .

There was one very strange thing more, with which the Court was newly entertained. As this Woman was under a Guard, passing by the great spacious Meeting-house of *Salem*, she gave a look towards the House: And Immediately a *Dæmon* invisibly entering the Meeting-house, tore down a part of it; so that tho' there was no Person to be seen there, yet the People, at the noise, running in, found a Board, which was strongly fastned with several Nails, transported unto another quarter of the House.¹

This is from the trial of Elizabeth How:

There was likewise a Cluster of Depositions, That one *Isaac Cummings* refusing to lend his Mare unto the Husband of this How, the Mare was within a Day or two taken in a strange condition: The Beast seemed much abused, being bruised as if she had been running over the Rocks, and marked where the Bridle went, as if burnt with a red hot Bridle. Moreover, one using a Pipe of Tobacco for the Cure of the Beast, a blue Flame issued out of her, took hold of her Hair, and not only spread and burnt on her, but it also flew upwards towards the Roof of the Barn, and had like to have set the Barn on Fire: And the Mare Dyed very suddenly.²

There remains one more book by Cotton Mather that deserves mention. It contains unquestionably his best prose. It is devoid of that dreadful striving for bizarre similes and grotesque metaphors, so common in the "Magnalia" and "The Wonders of the Invisible World," and it is also free of their sprawling, rumbling sentences, laden with preposterous pedantry. Rather, it is written in a very simple style, and what is even more strange for Mather, is full of a gentility and a kindness and a homely wisdom that seem almost incredible coming from him. The book of his I refer to is "Essays to do Good." This

¹ Mather's "Wonders of the Invisible World." Edition of John Russell Smith. London. 1862. pp. 137-138.

² *Ibid.* pp. 152-153.

is the title by which it is known in the general literature; Mather's own title, however, was "Bonifacius: An Essay upon the Good that is to be devised and designed by those who desire to answer the great end of life, and to Do Good while they live. A book offered, first, in general, unto all Christians, in a personal capacity, or in a relative. The more particularly unto magistrates, ministers, physicians, lawyers, schoolmasters, gentlemen, officers, churches, and unto all societies of a religious Character and intention: with humble proposals of unexceptionable methods to *do good* in the world." It was first published in Boston in 1710, eighteen years before his death. The first English edition appeared in Glasgow in 1825, and the second American edition was published in Boston twenty years later.

The book had a great influence on Benjamin Franklin. It is easy to see why. The chapter titles themselves give a hint as to the reason: "Much occasion for doing," "The excellence of well-doing," "The reward of well-doing," "The diligence of wicked men in doing evil," "The true nature of good works," "On doing good to our relations, children, etc.," "On doing good to our servants," "On doing good to our neighbours," "Proposals to churches for doing good," "Miscellaneous proposals to gentlemen," and "Societies for the reformation of manners."

Franklin, as I have said, was greatly influenced by this book, but he surely never rose to it in anything he ever wrote. Indeed, there are passages that are charged with an imagination and a poetic sweep that cannot be duplicated in anything, save, perhaps, "Bacon's Epitaph," written during the first 150 years of our history. Note, for example, this passage, especially the latter part:

I will not yet propose the Reward of well-doing, and the glorious things which the mercy and truth of God will perform for those who devise good; because I would have to do with such as esteem it a sufficient reward to itself. I will suppose my readers to be possessed of that ingenious temper, which will induce them to account themselves well rewarded in the thing itself, if God will permit them to do good in the world. It is an invaluable honour to do good; it is an incomparable pleasure. A man must look upon himself as dignified and gratified by God, when an opportunity to do good is put into his hands! He must embrace it with rapture, as enabling him to answer the great end of his being.

He must manage it with rapturous delight, as a most suitable business, as a most precious privilege. . . . Certainly, to do good, is a thing that brings its own recompense, in the opinion of those who deem information on this head worthy of recompense. I will only say that if my readers are strangers to such a disposition as they, and do not consider themselves enriched and favoured by God when he employs them in doing good—with such persons I have done, and will beg them to lay the book aside: it will be irksome to carry on any conversation with them: it is a subject on which the house of Caleb will not be conversed with. . . .

How full of devises are we for our own secular advantage! and, how expert in devising many little things to be done for ourselves! We apply our thoughts with mighty assiduity to the old question, "What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" . . . But, O rational, immortal, heaven, born soul, are thy wondrous faculties capable of no greater improvements, no better employments? Why should a soul of such high capacities, a soul that may be clothed in the "scarlet" of angels, yet "embrace a dunghill!" O let a blush, deeper than scarlet, be thy clothing, for being found so meanly occupied. Alas, in the multitude of thy thoughts with these, hast thou no disposition to raise thy soul to some such thoughts as these, what may be done for God, for Christ, for my own soul, and for the most important interests of mankind? How many hundreds of thoughts have we for ourselves, to one for God, his cause, and his people in the world! How then can we pretend that we love him, or prove that a carnal, a criminal self-love has not the dominion over us? I again come to a soul of heavenly extract, and cry, Awake! shake off thy chains, lie no longer fettered in a base confinement! Assert the liberty of thinking on the noblest question in the world, "What good may I do in the world?" There was a time when it was lamented by no less a man than Gregory the Great, the Bishop of Rome, "I am sunk into the world!" This may be the complaint of a soul that minds every thing else, and rarely recollects that noblest question. Ah! "star fallen from heaven" and choked in dust, rise and soar up to something answerable to thy origin.¹

¹ A new edition of "Essays to Do Good. . . ." improved by George Burder. From the latest London edition. Boston. 1808. pp. 27-31.

Here is another, from the chapter entitled, "On doing good to neighbours":

This excellent zeal should be extended to the neighborhood. Neighbours! you stand related to each other; and you should contrive how others should have reason to rejoice in your neighbourhood. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour"; but we shall scarcely allow him to be so, unless he be more excellent as a neighbour: he must excel in the duties of good neighbourhood. Let that man be better than his neighbour who labours most to be a better neighbour — to do most good to his neighbour.¹

A third, from the chapter entitled, "The duties of Schoolmasters":

I will add, it is very desirable to manage the discipline of the school, by means of rewards, rather than of punishments. Many methods of rewarding the diligent and deserving may be invented; and a boy of an ingenious temper, by the expectation of reward (*ad palmæ cursurus honores*) will do his best. You esteem Quintilian. Hear him: Use stripes sparingly; rather let the youth be stimulated by praise, and by the distinctions conferred on his classmates. If a fault must be punished let instruction both to the delinquent and to the spectator, accompany the correction. Let the odious name of sin which enforced the correction, be declared; and let nothing be done in an anger, but with every mark of tenderness and concern.

Ajax Flagellifer may be read in the school; he is not fit to be the master of it. Let it not be said of boys, that they were brought up in the "school of Tyrannus." Pliny says, that bears are the better for beating: More fit to have the management of bears than of ingenious boys, are those masters who cannot give a bit of learning without giving a blow with it. . . . It is boasted sometimes of a schoolmaster, that such a brave man had his education under him; but it is never said, how many, who might have been brave men, have been ruined by him; how many brave wits have been dispirited, confounded, murdered by his barbarous way of managing them!²

¹ *Ibid.* p. 34.

² *Ibid.* pp. 128-130.

And here is Mather's general conclusion:

I will conclude with a declaration which I will boldly maintain: It is this: Were a man able to write in seven languages; could he daily converse with the sweets of all the liberal sciences to which the most accomplished men make pretensions: were he to entertain himself with all the ancient and modern history; and could he feast continually on the curiosities which the different branches of learning may discover to him: — All this would not afford the ravishing satisfaction which he might find in relieving the distress of a poor, miserable neighbour; nor would it bear comparison with the heartfelt delight which he might obtain by doing an extensive good to the kingdom of our great Saviour in the world, or by exerting his efforts to redress the miseries under which mankind is generally languishing.¹

Only when thinking of "Essays to do Good" can one say of Mather what Professor Murdock has said of the man as a whole, namely, that he was "an expert manipulator of English prose."² It is rather strange that Professor Tyler dismisses the book with a short, solitary paragraph,³ and that Professor Bliss Perry in his "The American Spirit in Literature"⁴ doesn't mention it at all. Incidentally, it is amazing to note that Professor Leon Kellner, author of that short but generally excellent "History of American Literature," leaves out Mather completely.

Excepting "Essays to do Good," everything that he wrote possessed small literary value. The fact was that his generally fantastic style, with its grotesqueries of simile and absurdities of pedantry, jarred even the ears of his contemporaries. Thomas Prince, the founder of American bibliography, said of him, "In his style he was something singular, and not so agreeable to the gust of the age,"⁵ and even his son, Samuel, was displeased with his "straining for far-fetched and dear-bought hints."⁶ But whatever doubts his contemporaries may have had about his style, his successors were certain about

¹ A new edition of "Essays to Do Good," improved by George Burder. From the latest London edition. Boston. 1808. pp. 227-228.

² "Selections from Cotton Mather," edited with an introduction by Kenneth B. Murdock. N. Y. 1926. p. xxxii.

³ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 84.

⁴ Published by the Yale University Press. New Haven. 1918.

⁵ "Sermon on the death of Cotton Mather," by Thomas Prince. Boston. 1729. p. 24.

⁶ "Life of Cotton Mather," by his son, Samuel Mather. Boston. 1820. p. 69.

its quality, and repudiated it most effectively by discarding it. Though they held on tenaciously to his theology and thus transmitted his barbarism for generations to come, they rid themselves of his manner of presenting them. Jonathan Edwards, his successor as the Puritan overlord, possessed all of his ferocity against, and the pathologic dread of, the Devil, yet nearly everything he wrote was at least intelligible, and often was literature of a high order.

4. JONATHAN EDWARDS

There is no more devastating argument against Calvinism and all it means than the life and deeds of Jonathan Edwards, the last and greatest champion of Puritanism in New England. He was in many ways what Sir James MacIntosh has said of him, "unmatched, certainly unsurpassed, among men."¹ In sheer intellectual resourcefulness he was on a par with such giants as Kant, Spinoza, Hume, Pascal, and Leibnitz, and he was not wholly underserving of what Fichte said of his monumental treatise on ethics, "Treatise of Religious Affections," the first such study in America: "So has this solitary thinker of North America risen to the deepest and loftiest ground which can underlie the principle of morals."² He was one of the world's greatest preachers in his day.³ He was unquestionably the clearest and most effective writer of all the Puritan divines. And yet today he is remembered mainly by his barbaric sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," and his influence upon enlightened American thought is nil.

He had it in him to become an American Kant or Luther, but he ended his life only as a somewhat more intelligent Cotton Mather. On at least two occasions he came close to composing works of lasting metaphysical value, as witness his celebrated "Inquiry into the Mod-

¹ Quoted in "Kantean Elements in Jonathan Edwards," by Mattoon Monroe Curtis. *Philosophische Abhandlungen*. Max Heinze. zum 70. Geburtstage gewidmet von Freunden und Schülern. Berlin. 1906. p. 34. This paper by Dr. Curtis is the most adequate study of Edwards' relationship to Kant in print.

² Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 35.

³ In his paper, "Jonathan Edwards, A Study," in "Biblical and Theological Studies," by Members of the Faculty of the Princeton Theological Seminary (published in commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Seminary. N. Y. 1912), Professor John De Witt says, "[Edwards] had both a gift of penetration like Luther's and a gift of construction like Calvin's. It is also true, I think, that in the subtlety of his intellect, he was greater than either." p. 127.

ern Prevailing Notions Respecting that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency" and the aforementioned "Treatise of Religious Affections." But in each case, at the critical moment, Calvinism got control of his mind and ruined completely the brilliancy and logical cogency of both endeavors. Posterity has dealt harshly with his memory, as it always deals harshly with the memories of half-hearted and two-minded men. It has forgotten the giant that was in him but was never allowed full egress, and it has remembered only the pathetic, befuddled, sickly, angry Puritan, struggling in vain to stem back the new day that was being ushered in by a restless printer-contemporary, Benjamin Franklin.

The life history of Edwards, like that of all the other great New Englanders of his day, was of romance and precocity all compact. He was born on October 5, 1703, at East Windsor, Conn. His father was a well-known Hartford minister, and his mother was the daughter of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, the leading minister of Northampton, Mass. He was an only son, the fifth of eleven children. As a mere child he was given a thorough training in the accepted Latin, Greek and Hebrew religious writings, and he probably read everything else, however abstruse, he could lay his hands on. He had also started the habit of keeping a notebook in which he put down whatever thoughts came to him. Thus we find him, at the age of not more than twelve, a full-fledged metaphysician. Word came to him at that time that a neighborhood boy had advanced the notion that the soul is material, and remains with the body till the Resurrection. So he wrote him this letter in rebuttal:

I am informed that you have advanced a notion that the soul is material, and attends the body till the Resurrection. As I am a professed lover of novelty, you must imagine I am very much entertained by this discovery; which, however old in some parts of the world, is new to us. But suffer my curiosity a little further. I would know the manner of the kingdom before I swear allegiance. First, I would know whether this material soul keeps with (the body) in the coffin; and if so, it might not be convenient to build a repository for it. In order to which, I would know what shape it is of, whether round, triangular, or four-square, or whether it is a number of long fine strings reaching from the head to the foot; and whether it does not live in a very discontented life. I am afraid when the coffin gives way, the earth will fall in and

crush it. But if it should choose to live above ground, and hover about the grave, how big it is; whether it covers all the body, or is assigned to the head, or breast or how. If it covers all the body, what it does when another body is laid upon it; whether the first gives way, and, if so, where is the place of retreat. But suppose that souls are not so big but that ten or a dozen of them may be about one body, whether they will not quarrel for the highest place; and as I insist much upon honor and propriety, I would know whether I must quit my dear head, if a superior soul comes in that way. But, above all, I am concerned to know what they do where a burying place has been filled twenty-thirty, or an hundred times. If they are a top of one another, the uppermost will be so far off that it can take no care of the body. I strongly suspect they must march off every time there comes a new set. I hope there is some other place provided for them but dust. The undergoing so much hardship and being deprived of the body at last, will make them ill-tempered. I leave it with your physical genius to determine whether some medical applications might not be proper in such cases; and subscribe your proselyte — when I can have solution of these matters.¹

While he was pursuing such philosophical speculations, Edwards also read heavily in the natural sciences, and made many observations of his own. Nothing, indeed, in the whole realm of knowledge was alien to this boy of less than twelve. His father, Timothy, was in frequent correspondence with someone abroad concerning the local natural history, and to that correspondent young Jonathan wrote a letter regarding the habits of the spiders in his part of the country that would have done honor to a man four times his age.

May it please your Honor. There are some things that I have happily seen of the wondrous way of the working of the spider. Although everything belonging to this insect is admirable, there are some phenomena relating to them more particularly wonderful. Everybody that is used to the country, knows their marching in the air from one tree to another, sometimes at the distance of five or six rods. Nor can one go out in a dewy morning, at the

1 "The Works of President Edwards. With a Memorial of his Life," edited by Sereno E. Dwight. N. Y. 1830. 10 vols. Vol. I. pp. 20-21. The first volume contains the Life and the complete body of Edwards' writings before his ordination.

latter end of August and the beginning of September, but he shall see multitudes of webs, made visible by the dew that hangs on them, reaching from one tree, branch, and shrub to another. . . . But these webs may be seen well enough in the daytime by an observing eye, by their reflection in the sunbeams. Especially, late in the afternoon may these webs that are between the eye and that part of the horizon that is under the sun, be seen very plainly, being advantageously posited to reflect the rays. And the spiders themselves may be very often seen travelling in the air, from one stage to another amongst the trees, in a very unaccountable manner. But I have often seen that which is much more astonishing. In very calm and serene days in the forementioned time of the year, standing at some distance behind the end of a house or some other opaque body, so as just to hide the disk of the sun and keep off his dazzling rays, and looking along close by the side of it, I have seen a vast multitude of little shining webs, and glistening strings, brightly reflecting the sunbeams, and some of them of great length, and of such a height that one would think they were tacked to the vault of the heavens, and would be burnt like tow in the sun. . . . And since I have seen these things, I have been very conversant with spiders, resolving if possible to find out the mysteries of these their astonishing works. And I have been so happy as very frequently to see their manner of working; that when a spider would go from tree to another, or would fly in the air, he first lets himself down a little way from the twig he stands by a web; . . . and then laying hold of it by his forefeet, and bearing himself by that, puts out a web . . . which is drawn out of his tail with infinite ease, in the gently moving air, to what length the spider pleases; and if the farther end happens to catch by a shrub or the branch of a tree, the spider immediately feels it, and fixes the hither end of it to the web by which he lets himself down, and goes over by that web which he put out of his tail.¹

With such a mind Edwards entered Yale in 1716, and was graduated four years later at the head of a class of ten. His formal education there was surely not pretentious. He studied little more than a few books of Virgil, the orations of Cicero, the Greek Testament, the Psalms in Hebrew, the elements of logic, Ames' "Theology"

¹ Dwight edition of Edwards' Works. Vol. I. pp. 23-28.

and "Cases of Conscience," and a smattering of physics, mathematics, geography and astronomy. In his sophomore year a critical event took place in his life. It was then that he first read Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," and he himself relates that he did so with a joy greater "than the most greedy miser finds when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some newly discovered treasure."¹ He was then fourteen years old.

While in college he kept four notebooks: they were labelled "The Mind," "Natural Science," "The Scriptures," and "Miscellanies." In them are to be found the germs, and often the clearest expression, of nearly all his philosophical, theological, and scientific ideas. In "Natural Science" he suggested the existence of ether, argued that water was a compressible fluid, tried to explain thunder and lightning in terms of electricity, demonstrated that the fixed stars are suns, and made important observations on the life of trees and the process of evaporation, and also on the lever and the phenomena of sound and changing winds. How he came to all this knowledge while still a youth is a mystery. Much of it was surely due to his own observation and reasoning, for the number of scientific books in the Colonies in his day was extremely meagre.

For the two years following his graduation from Yale, he continued the study of theology in New Haven. For about eight months prior to April, 1723, he was the stated supply of a small Presbyterian church in New York City. He was invited to remain there, but declined, and instead accepted a call to tutor at Yale from the Summer of 1724 to the Summer of 1726.

He was rather long in becoming genuinely converted. He was reading one day, when he was twenty-two, the words of Scripture, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever, Amen," when "there came to him for the first time a sort of inward sweet delight in God and divine things."² Shortly thereafter he was walking in a solitary place in his father's pasture, when the "sweet delight" got a stronger hold of him. Of this experience he spoke as follows in his diary, thereby showing that there was much of the pantheistic poet in him, and that he could write glowingly when deeply moved:

¹ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 30.

² "Jonathan Edwards," by Alexander V. G. Allen. Boston. 1889. p. 25. This biography is the most complete in print. It is thirty-nine years more recent than that by S. E. Dwight, and is more judicious in its judgments and more inclusive in its facts.

After this my sense of divine things gradually increased and became more and more lively, and had more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything altered: there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast or appearance of divine glory in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything, — in the sun, moon and stars; in clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature, which used greatly to fix my mind. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance, and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the mean time singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplation of the Creator and Redeemer. . . . Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunder-storm arising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, so to speak, at the first appearance of a thunder-storm; and used to take the opportunity, at such times, to fix myself in order to view the clouds and see the lightnings play, and hear the majesty and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. . . . I sometimes said to myself I do certainly know that I love holiness; it seemed to me that there was nothing in it but what was ravishingly lovely, the highest beauty and amiableness, — a divine beauty, far purer than anything upon earth. . . . The soul of a true Christian appeared like a little white flower as we see in the opening of the year; low and humble on the ground, opening its bosom to receive the pleasant beams of the sun's glory; rejoicing as it were in a calm rapture, diffusing around a sweet fragrantcy; standing peacefully and lovingly in the midst of other flowers round about, all in like manner opening their bosoms to drink in the light of the sun.¹

His conversion was plainly upon him, and soon he made this entry in his diary:

On January 12, 1723, I made a solemn dedication of myself to God and wrote it down; giving up myself and all that I had to God, to be for the future in no respect my own, to act as one that had no right to himself in any respect; and solemnly vowed to take God for my whole portion and felicity, looking on nothing

¹ Quoted in "Jonathan Edwards," by Alexander V. G. Allen. Boston. 1889. pp. 25-26.

else as any part of my happiness, nor acting as if it were; and his law for the constant rule of my obedience, engaging to fight with all my might against the world, the flesh, and the devil, to the end of my life.¹

Thus was born Edwards the wild Calvinist, and thus was relegated far into the background, though never wholly in complete oblivion, the Edwards to whom "God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything, — in the sun, moon and stars; in clouds and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature."

On February 15, 1727, Edwards was ordained, and immediately accepted a position as assistant to his maternal grandfather, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, minister of Northampton, Mass. In the same year he married Sarah Pierrepont, great-granddaughter of Thomas Hooker, through her mother. There is a pretty story connected with this marriage. Edwards had first heard of her in New Haven, four years previous, when she was thirteen years old. Her piety had moved him so much that he gave the following expression to his feelings:

They say there is a young lady in New Haven who is beloved of that great Being who made and rules the world, and that there are certain seasons in which this great Being, in some way or other invisible, comes to her and fills her mind with exceeding sweet delight, and that she hardly cares for anything except to meditate on Him; that she expects after a while to be received up where He is, to be raised up out of the world and caught up into heaven; being assured that He loves her too well to let her remain at a distance from Him always. There she is to dwell with Him, and to be ravished with His love and delight forever. Therefore, if you present all the world before her, with the richest of its treasures, she disregards and cares not for it, and is unmindful of any pain or affliction. She has a strange sweetness in her mind, and singular piety in her affections; is most just and conscientious in all her conduct; and you could not persuade her to do anything wrong or sinful, if you would give her all the world, lest she should offend this Being. She is of a wonderful calmness, and universal benevolence of mind; especially after this great God had manifested Himself to her mind. She will sometimes go about

¹ Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 27.

from place to place singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure, and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some-one invisible always conversing with her.¹

No sooner was Edwards ordained than he wrote to Miss Pierrepont, who was then seventeen, demanding a speedy marriage. The lady, apparently, was somewhat hesitant. So he became even more urgent, and admonished his beloved thus:

Patience is commonly esteemed a virtue, but in this case I may almost regard it as a vice.²

So they married, and Sarah became the mother of his twelve children. The Rev. Solomon Stoddard died in 1729, and Edwards succeeded to his post of minister of Northampton, which was then one of the largest and wealthiest congregations in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Two years later he preached at Boston the Public Lecture, which was later published under the title, "God Glorified in Man's Dependence." Its central argument was that God has absolute sovereignty in the work of redemption, and it was thus his first public attack on Arminianism. In the meantime he continued his fiery sermons at Northampton, which proved to be so effective that a revival of religion spread throughout the town, and by the Winter of 1734, nearly 300 conversions and admissions to the church were made. Edwards made a most minute study of these conversions, and in 1737 published the result of his observations in a book entitled, "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton." The next year he published "Discourses on Various Important Subjects," which contained the five sermons which were the most effective in the revival. The latter subsided somewhat in 1735, but it had already spread through the Connecticut Valley, and its fame had reached even England and Scotland.

Then came the Great Awakening of 1739-1740, that strange religious frenzy which gripped all the Colonies for a year, and then of a sudden evaporated. Edwards looked upon it as the dawning of the millennial age.³ He was the real leader of it, though nominally the

¹ Quoted in "Jonathan Edwards," by A. V. G. Allen. pp. 45-46.

² Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 46.

³ See the excellent discussion on this point in "Ten New England Leaders," by Williston Walker. N. Y. 1901. p. 237 ff.

leader was the Rev. George Whitefield, of England, who made his first appearance in an American pulpit in the church at Northampton. The orthodox heads of the church did not sympathize with the movement, particularly with the emphasis placed on the expression of the Holy Spirit in bodily contortions and swoonings, and in a short time an appreciable portion of the public was won over to their side. Edwards himself put little stress on the bodily expressions of faith, and apologized for all the swoonings and outcries and convulsions in a pamphlet entitled, "The Distinguishing Marks of the Work of the Spirit of God" (1741), but at the same time he defended the general philosophy of the Great Awakening. Public feeling, however, grew even more bitter against it, so in 1742, he was forced to write a second apology, "Thoughts on the Revival in New England." In it he went to the extreme of defending the preaching of terror, even to children. The sermon only served to stir up additional opposition to him, and in 1743, the Rev. Charles Chauncey, pastor of the First Church at Boston, and who later played an important part in pre-Revolutionary politics, published anonymously a reply under the title, "The Late Religious Commotions in New England Considered."

Worst of all, Edwards' own congregation became less and less tolerant of him till in 1748 it split sharply with him when it refused to comply with his rule that Baptism was not enough to admit a man to the civil privileges of church membership, and that a requisite additional condition was proof of conversion. His preaching became increasingly distasteful, and soon the church, by a vote of 200 to 23, ordered that the pastoral relation be discontinued. His days as a respected and practicing Puritan theologian came to an end. His Farewell Sermon was not as dignified as Harry Mormon Gardiner would have us think.¹ It was full of venom and ferocity. Here is a typical passage from it:

My parting with you, is in some respects, in a peculiar manner, a melancholy parting; in as much as I leave you in the most melancholy circumstance, because I leave you in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, having the wrath of God abiding on you, and remaining under condemnation to everlasting misery and destruction. Seeing I must leave, it would have been a comfortable and happy circumstance of our parting, if I had left you in

¹ "Jonathan Edwards," by Harry Mormon Gardiner. *The Encyclopædia Britannica*. Eleventh Edition. Vol. IX. p. 5.

Christ, safe and blessed in that sure and glorious rest of the saints. — But it is otherwise, I leave you far off, aliens and strangers, wretched subjects and captives of sin and satan, and prisoners of vindictive justice; without Christ, and without God in the world.¹

Thus was Edwards thrown upon the world, but his most fruitful years were still ahead of him. Many offers of pastorates were made to him, including one in Scotland and one in Virginia, but he declined them all in favor of the pastorate of a small church in Stockbridge, Mass., where he also acted as missionary to the Housatonic Indians. He grew to admire the Indians greatly, even though he had to preach to them through an interpreter, and he delivered heavy blows against the malpractices of the white men upon them. It was in Stockbridge also that he wrote his most important philosophical works: "Original Sin," "Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue," "Dissertation Concerning the End for Which God created the World," and his classical "Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions Respecting that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency." The latter work he composed in the amazingly short time of four and a half months. It was first published in 1754.

On the death of President Burr, who in 1752 married Edwards' daughter, Esther, who became the mother of Aaron Burr, he accepted the presidency of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton, and was installed on February 16, 1758. But he immediately contracted small-pox, and died on March 28, 1758, having been in office a little over a month. He was buried in the old Princeton cemetery.

Edwards is best remembered in the popular mind as a rabid theologian, but the fact was that he really made few original contributions to theology and was not as continuously rabid as some think. Great injustice, both of overpraise and of bitter condemnation, has been done to his memory on this score. He was not, as the Rev. Joseph H. Crooker has said, "afflicted with a species of delusional insanity, which took possession of him in his early youth and which had its center in the dogma of 'Divine sovereignty.'"² And he was not the first theologian in America to stress "the inward state of man in

¹ Dwight edition of Edwards' Works. Vol. I. The Farewell Sermon. p. 644.

² Quoted in "Jonathan Edwards as Philosopher and Theologian," by Henry Churchill King. *The Hartford Seminary Record*. Vol. XIV. Nov. 1903–August 1904. Hartford, Conn. 1904. p. 24.

nature and in grace,"¹ as Professor De Witt has said. Thomas Hooker and Thomas Shepard and Michael Wigglesworth and the two Mathers were as introspective as Edwards ever was. When Professor De Witt adds, "It seems to me that it is not too much to say that, up to this time, his influence in the English-speaking world — not on all thinking, but on distinctively dogmatic thinking — has been as great as that of either Joseph Butler or Samuel Taylor Coleridge."² he is going beyond the facts. All of the theological issues which were real to Edwards, including his greatest one of Arminianism, are now dead, and the faith he put in the phenomena of conversion is now a mockery, and has been so for a hundred years. In the last fifty years, indeed, Edwards as a theologian has been ignored completely — save on seminary occasions, such as the one for which Professor De Witt wrote his own essay.

Edwards' manner in the pulpit was exceedingly quiet, with little or no gesture, and his voice was not loud. But he did possess the power of profoundly moving his audiences.³ He had a mighty wrath. His main objects of attack were the congenital sinfulness of man and the spreading of the heresy of Arminianism, the latter of which caused him particular anguish. Starting in Holland, in the first decade of the Seventeenth Century, as the first powerful opposition to Calvinism, this unorthodox doctrine rapidly spread to England and then to the Colonies, where it first caused great worry to Increase Mather.

Its principal tenets were that election is based upon divine foreknowledge and not upon absolute predestination (the distinction is far from intelligible); that the atonement is universal, which is to say, that Christ died for all and not only for the elect, though only believers receive the benefits of his death; that divine grace is not irresistible, but may be rejected; and that there is no Scriptural basis for holding that the regenerate may never fall from grace.⁴ These beliefs were in direct opposition to the dogmas of Calvinism, but what incensed Edwards most was that they detracted from the absolute sovereignty of God, and left some choice and possibility of redemption to man. In his thinking, at least, Edwards was the most bitter hater of man the American pulpit has ever had. He was completely devoid

¹ "Jonathan Edwards. A Study," by John De Witt, in "Biblical and Theological Studies by the Members of the Princeton Theological Seminary . . ." N. Y. 1912. p. 130.

² *Ibid.* p. 131.

³ "Jonathan Edwards," by A. V. G. Allen. Boston. 1889. pp. 41-42.

⁴ There is an excellent discussion on this subject in "Ten New England Leaders," by Williston Walker. N. Y. 1901. Chapter "Jonathan Edwards." pp. 217-263. See especially pp. 229-231.

of Jesus' faith in Adam's children. As Dr. Allen, his most authoritative biographer, has pointed out, he always asserted God at the expense of humanity, and where man should be, he presented a fearful void.¹

It is thus easy to understand why his imprecatory sermons, particularly those preached during the Great Awakening, were so appalling. Some of them are among the most venomous and ferocious that have ever come from a theologian. Here are the titles of the four better known ones: "Future Punishments Unavoidable," "The Eternity of Hell Torments," "Men Naturally God's Enemies," and "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."² The last was his masterpiece. He preached it on July 8, 1741, at Enfield, Conn., and it is therefore frequently referred to as the Enfield sermon. Probably nothing like it has ever been uttered before or since. Here is an excerpt from it:

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment; it is ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell last night; that you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep; and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up: there is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship: yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great

¹ "Jonathan Edwards." Allen, p. 388.

² The first two can be obtained in Vol. VI, and the second two in Vol. VII, of Dwight's ten volume edition of President Edwards' works.

furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell: you hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. . . .¹

It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: there will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery: when you look forward you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions and millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this Almighty merciless vengeance; and then, when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: for who knows the power of God's anger?²

Edwards was always extremely careless of his facts when he attempted a logical defense of Christianity. He was no such theological scholar as his English contemporary Berkeley. He was capable of statements such as the following:

The difference of the two revolutions [Mahometanism and Christianity] was immensely great as to *goodness*. The change made in the world by the propagation of Christianity, was as a great change indeed, with regard to light and knowledge. It

¹ "The Works of President Edwards," edited by Samuel Austin. 8 vols. First American Edition. Worcester. 1839. Vol. VII. pp. 496-497.

² *Ibid.* p. 501.

was a change from great darkness to glorious and marvelous light. By the preaching of the gospel in the world, the day spring from on high visited the earth, and the sun arose after a long night of the grossest darkness. But as to the change made in Christendom by the propagation of Mahometanism, there was no increase of light by it, but, on the contrary, it was a change from light to darkness. It was a propagation of ignorance, and not of knowledge. As to the change made among the Heathens, as we observed before, there was not a small degree of increased light; and all that was added, was borrowed from Christianity. . . . Christianity was propagated by light, instruction and knowledge, reasoning and inquiry. These things were encouraged by the gospel; and by these means the gospel prevailed. But Mahometanism was not propagated by light and instruction, but by darkness; not by encouraging reasoning and research, but by discouraging knowledge and learning; by shutting out those things, and forbidding inquiry; . . . It was propagated by the power of the sword also; by potent sultans, absolute tyrants, and mighty armies. Christianity was propagated by the weakest of men, unarmed with anything but meekness, humility, love, miracles, clear evidence, most virtuous, holy, and amiable examples, and the power and favour of eminent virtue, joined with assured belief of the truth, with self-denial and suffering for truth and holiness.¹

Edwards, as I have said, was surely no theological scholar. He made no contribution whatever to Biblical studies. Neither was he a kindly preacher. Hell was always in his mind, and the words of its tortures in his mouth and pen. There was no love in him for the human race; he hated all of Adam's children with a hatred bordering on the pathological. And yet it would be wrong to dismiss his preachings as the product of a disarranged mind. If he was incapable of the love of man, he was capable of the love of God and of nature, and to an extraordinary degree. The selections from his diary and from his stray observations already quoted prove beyond a doubt that he was, in a way, a mystic, not a St. Francis to be sure, but a mystic nevertheless. True enough, he relegated his mysticism far to the background after his conversion, but he never disposed of it completely. Indeed, long after his expulsion from the church of Northampton, he devoted a

¹ Dwight edition of Edwards' works. Vol. VII. pp. 299-302.

whole book to an exposition of his mystic philosophy, "Dissertation concerning the End for Which God Created the World," and in it there appears this:

As there is an infinite fulness of all possible good in God — a fulness of every perfection, of all excellency and beauty, and of infinite happiness — and as this fulness is capable of communication, or emanation *ad extra*; so it seems a thing amiable and valuable in *itself* that the infinite fountain of good should send forth abundant streams.¹

Edwards' real greatness lay in his philosophical studies. It is to them that he devoted his best intellectual powers. It would seem, indeed, that he was more interested in them, deep down in his heart, than in theological speculation. He never wrote one book that dealt wholly with theology, save it be "Original Sin." To get at his ideas regarding election and redemption, one must plow through hundreds of his sermons and writings, for he comes upon them suddenly, and then rushes on to his angry imprecations against sin. But in the field of philosophy he wrote at least four books dealing almost exclusively with that subject. They were "Religious Affections," "Dissertation Concerning the Nature of True Virtue," "Dissertation concerning the End for Which God Created the World," and "An Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions Respecting that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency."

In metaphysics Edwards was, in the main, a theistic idealist. But he was never wholly clear on this point. There were times when he came perilously close to being a pagan pantheist, and there were other times when he went the whole way with Plautus. He never came to a definite stand in his metaphysics. It is plain, however, that there was a great deal of the idealist in him.² His most satisfactory statement on the point is to be found in the journal, "The Mind," which he kept while at college:

It is agreed upon by every knowing philosopher, that Colours are not really in the things, no more than pain is in a needle; but strictly nowhere else than in the mind. But yet I think that Colour

¹ *Ibid.* Vol. III. p. 20.

² Whether Edwards got his idealism from Berkeley or evolved it all by himself has been the subject of controversy for years, but most scholars seem to be agreed that Berkeley was wholly unknown to Edwards before his Northampton days, when he had already stated his position. For an excellent discussion on this point see the essay on Edwards by Henry Churchill King, p. 29, and also that by Mr. Curtis, p. 39.

may have an existence out of the mind, with equal reason as any thing in the Body has any existence out of mind, beside the very substance of the body itself, which is nothing but the Divine power, or rather the Constant Exertion of it. For what idea is that, which we call by name of Body? I find Colour has the chief share in it. 'Tis nothing but Colour, and Figure, which is the termination of this Colour, together with some powers, such as the power of resisting, and motion, &c. that wholly makes up what we call Body. And if that, which we principally mean by the thing itself, cannot be said to be in the thing itself, I think nothing can be. If Colour exists not out of the mind, then nothing belonging to Body, exists out of the Mind but Resistance, which is Solidity, and the termination of this Resistance, with its relations, which is Figure, and the communication of this Resistance, from space to space, which is Motion; though the latter are nothing but modes of the former. Therefore, there is nothing out of mind but Resistance. And not that neither, when nothing is actually resisted. Then, there is nothing but the Power of Resistance. And as Resistance is nothing else but the actual exertion of God's power, so the Power can be nothing else, but the constant Law or Method of that actual exertion. And how is there any Resistance, except it be in some mind, in idea? What is it that is resisted? It is not Colour. And what else is it? It is ridiculous to say, that Resistance is resisted. That, does not tell us at all what is to be resisted. There must be something resisted before there can be Resistance; but to say Resistance is resisted, is ridiculously to suppose Resistance, before there is anything to be resisted. Let us suppose two globes only existing, and no mind. There is nothing else, *ex confesso*, but Resistance. That is, there is such a Law, that the space within the limits of a globular figure shall resist. Therefore, there is nothing there but a power, or an establishment. And if there be any Resistance really out of the mind, one power and establishment must resist another establishment and law of Resistance, which is exceedingly ridiculous. But yet it cannot be otherwise, if any way out of the mind. But now it is easy to conceive of Resistance, as a mode of an idea. It is easy to conceive of such a power, or constant manner of stopping or resisting a colour. The idea may be resisted, it may move, and stop and rebound; but how a real power, which is nothing real, can move and stop, is inconceivable, and is impos-

sible to say a word about it without contradiction. The world is therefore an ideal one; and the Law of creating, and the succession, of these ideas is constant and regular.¹

This is one of the most brilliant expositions of the essence of idealism ever made. Granted the premiss, its logic is irresistible. But Edwards changed his position often. In the last quotation God seems to be nothing more than Power, or Resistance, or, translated into modern scientific terminology, Energy. In the quotation from "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," however, He is the savage old man of barbaric theology. And He is also "in the sun, moon and stars; in clouds and blue sky." In other words, Edwards was an idealist, a Christian and a pagan pantheist, all in one. That he was singularly acute in the logic of his idealism does not make his contradictory position any better. The fact was that the Christian in him tended to predominate. His pantheism, for example, never approached the large-hearted pantheism of Spinoza, for whom the knowledge of God was the complete love of Him, and the supreme expression and attainment of human happiness. Not so for Edwards. With him, as Professor Frederick J. E. Woodbridge has said, in the ablest study of Edwards' philosophy in print, "man may know God completely and yet remain vicious. The devils believe and tremble, but cease not, therefore, to be devils. For while virtue grows as the knowledge of God grows, a virtuous disposition must first be given, natural or derived. . . . Wherever in intelligent beings, this disposition is lacking, vice must prevail in spite of perfect knowledge of God and his last end in creation."²

Edwards' argument for the existence of God was mainly like Descartes' ontological proof, but it also had a moral element in it, which is very similar to Kant's in "The Critique of Practical Reason." Neither Kant nor Edwards made any radical distinction between morality and religion, and to both God was essentially a moral being. Moreover, both looked upon ethics as the deepest interest in nature. Said Edwards:

He that sees the beauty of holiness, or true moral good, sees the greatest and most important thing in the world. . . . Unless

¹ Dwight's edition of Edwards' works. Vol. I. pp. 668-669.

² "Jonathan Edwards," by Frederick J. E. Woodbridge. *The Philosophical Review*. N. Y. July, 1904. p. 403.

this is seen nothing is seen that is worth seeing: for there is no other true excellence or beauty. Unless it be understood, nothing is understood worthy of the noble faculty of understanding.¹

For Kant, however, the notion of the moral essence of the universe was got at as the result of a long and arduous process of reasoning. To Edwards it was a self-evident fact, demanding no proof. Whenever he treated of God or of His place in the universe, he never argued; he made affirmations.

Edwards' celebrated book on the freedom of the will deserves most of the encomiums that have been heaped upon it. There is a display of logical reasoning in it that is truly amazing. As a minute, persistent, tireless philosophical essay, it is one of the wonders of American thought. Here is a specimen of its thinking.

The plain and obvious meaning of the words Freedom and Liberty, in common speech, is power, opportunity, or advantage that any one has, to do as he pleases. Or, in other words, his being free from hindrance or impediment in the way of doing, or conducting in any respect, as he wills. (I say not only doing, but conducting; because a voluntary forbearing to do, sitting still, keeping silence, etc., are instances of persons' conduct, about which Liberty is exercised; though they are not so properly called doing.) And the contrary to Liberty, whatever name we call that by, is a person's being hindered or unable to conduct as he will, or being necessitated to do otherwise.

If this which I have mentioned be the meaning of the word Liberty, in the ordinary use of language; as I trust that none that has ever learned to talk, and is unprejudiced, will deny: then it will follow that in propriety of speech neither Liberty, nor its contrary can properly be ascribed to any being or thing, but that which has such a faculty, power or property, as is called will. For that which is possessed of no such thing as will, cannot have any power or opportunity of doing according to its will, nor be restrained from acting agreeable to it. And therefore to talk of Liberty, or the contrary, as belonging to the very will itself, is not to speak good sense; if we judge of sense, and nonsense, by the original and proper signification of words. For the will itself

¹ From "Treatise of Religious Affections." Section V. p. 120. Dwight's edition of Edwards' works. Vol. VIII.

is not an agent that has a will: the power of choosing itself, has not a power of choosing. That which has the power of volition or choice is the man or the soul, and not the power of volition itself. And he that has the Liberty of doing according to his will, is the agent or doer who is possessed of the will; and not the will which he is possessed of. We say with propriety, that a bird let loose has power and Liberty to fly; but not that the bird's power of flying has a power and Liberty of flying. To be free is the property of an agent, who is possessed of powers and faculties, as much as to be cunning, valiant, bountiful, or zealous. But these qualities are the properties of men or persons and not the properties of properties.

There are two things that are contrary to this which is called Liberty in common speech. One is constraint; the same is otherwise called force, compulsion, and coaction; which is a person's being necessitated to do a thing contrary to his will. The other is restraint; which is his being hindered, and not having power to do according to his will. But that which has no will, cannot be subject of these things. I need say the less on this head, Mr. Locke having set the same thing forth, with so great clearness, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*.

But one thing more I would observe concerning what is vulgarly called Liberty; namely, that power and opportunity for one to do and conduct as he will, or according to his choice, is all that is meant by it; without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause or original of that choice; or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition; whether it was caused by some external motive or internal habitual bias; whether it was determined by some internal antecedent volition, or whether it happened without a cause; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing, or not connected. Let the person come by his volition or choice how he will, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is fully and perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom.¹

¹ "An Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions Respecting that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency." First American edition of Edwards' works. 8 vols. Worcester. 1808. Vol. V. pp. 38-40. Editor's name not given.

Until toward the end, the essay is one of the most impregnable arguments for determinism ever made, and is deserving of what Dugald Stewart has called it: "a work which never was and never will be answered."¹ But as he approached the end of his inquiry Edwards let flee his meticulously philosophical attitude and became the angry theologian again, and by one of the most brummagem pieces of reasoning attempted to prove that it was quite consistent with determinism for man to be a free agent when it came to the worship of God and the observance of the Calvinistic polity, and to suffer the torments of hell if he does not experience conversion and go to church regularly and submit to baptism and partake of the Sacrament of bread and adhere to all the other tenets of the Puritan church. As Professor Woodbridge has so shrewdly said of the essay:

But just because it is so great, its lack of philosophical thoroughness is remarkable. What amazes one about it is that an analysis of the will so acute, so sane, so dispassionate, so free from prejudice or tricky argument, and so sound, if the distinctions of terms made by Edwards is admitted, could yet, with hardly a trace of rational justification, be linked with a Calvinistic conception of God and the World.²

Professor Gardiner has said of Edwards: "Certainly the most able metaphysician and the most influential religious thinker of America, he must rank in theology, dialectics, mysticism and philosophy with Calvin and Fénelon, St. Augustine and Aquinas, Spinoza and Novalis; with Berkeley and Hume as the great English philosophers of the Eighteenth Century; and with Hamilton and Franklin as the three American thinkers of the same century of more than provincial importance."³

This statement is dubious from beginning to end. Edwards' influence abroad was confined to Scotland, England and Germany, and there only to the inner theological and philosophical circles, and there is no evidence whatever that his thinking left any impress in any of them. His ideas were by no means new to them. Apparently they marveled not so much at his originality as at the fact that a divine

¹ Quoted by Henry Churchill King, p. 37.

² Woodbridge, p. 396. For a somewhat similar opinion see the biography by A. V. G. Allen, p. 299 ff.

³ "Jonathan Edwards," by Harry Mormon Gardiner. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Eleventh Edition, Vol. IX, p. 5.

lost in the wilderness of America could think as well as they could. It was surely different with Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson.

As for comparing Edwards with Novalis, Spinoza, Hume, Aquinas and Calvin, and putting him on the same plane with those giants — that is nonsense. To be sure, if one searches his writings carefully enough, and indulges in some very fine and dubious “interpretations,” one can find hints in them of Hegel’s philosophy of the absolute, of Schopenhauer’s concept of the will as the essence of being, of Bain’s psycho-physical parallelism, of James’ pragmatism, of Kant’s moral idealism, of Lotze’s notion of the microcosm, of Leibnitz’s preëstablished harmony, of Hume’s skepticism, of Locke’s empiricism, of Royce’s curious Christian idealism, and even of Bertrand Russell’s idea of neutral essences. But only hints. Just as Edwards was never the full theologian, so was he never the complete philosopher. He always wavered between the two, though the former was generally in the ascendency. The trouble with him, as Professor Woodbridge has pointed out, was that “the philosopher never became the theologian or the theologian the philosopher. It is futile to try to understand Edwards’ Calvinism from his philosophy or his philosophy from his Calvinism. In him they are juxtaposed, not united. But they are not equally juxtaposed; the theology overshadows the philosophy.”¹

It is thus that Edwards emerges as one of the colossal tragedies in the history of American culture. He had it in him to become one of the greatest philosophers and theologians and genuine mystics of all time — an American Kant and Luther and St. Francis all in one. And on several occasions he came very close to being each of these. But every time, as he was about to make the last leap to greatness, his Calvinism intervened, and dragged him down to the state he was in immediately after his conversion — that of a stern and rabid, even though amazingly shrewd, and intellectually highly resourceful, Puritan, little better than Cotton Mather. There is some evidence that deep down in his soul he knew his tragedy and fought valiantly to solve it, but the facts of his life remain to tell their horrible story.²

¹ Woodbridge. p. 399. In this connection Professor Paul Elmer More has said, in “The Cambridge History of American Literature,” Vol. I. p. 60, “One cannot avoid the feeling, when his writings are surveyed as a whole, that in his service to a particular dogma of religion Edwards deliberately threw away the opportunity of making for himself, despite the laxness of his style, one of the very great names in literature.”

² Alexander V. G. Allen says in his excellent biography of Edwards that “he had recourse now and then to shorthand, in which he buried his most intimate thought or feeling. He charges himself not to allow it to appear as if he were familiar with books or conversant with the learned world. He seems to feel that he has a secret teaching which will create opposition when revealed,

In short, he made of his intellectual life a compromise, and he paid the price of all compromisers: intellectual paralysis in his lifetime and oblivion after his death. Some disciples did carry on whatever there was definite in his teachings,¹ but they were very few in number, and with their passing, the name of Edwards became no more than a subject of antiquarian interest. At no time did he have real lasting influence on American or world philosophical or theological thinking. Today he is not even an echo; he is no more than a word. He left nothing for posterity that is in the least vitalizing. The type of thinking which most widely prevails at present is wholly removed from his, and finds its roots in sources wholly different from his.

He had very little to do with the public affairs of his time. Puritanism as an overt cultural and political force in the New England Colonies was already on its deathbed. In Edwards it produced its last and unquestionably ablest champion. And in him also it produced its greatest tragedy and most devastating comment on itself as a way of life.

and clash with the prejudices and fashion of the age. On one occasion, after writing in shorthand, he concludes with the remark, 'Remember to act according to Proverbs xii, 23,—*A prudent man concealeth knowledge.*'" (Footnote 1, p. 19.)

¹ All of his disciples lived and died in the seventy-five years following Edwards' death. The more prominent of them were Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, Stephen West, John Smalley, Timothy Dwight, Asa Burton, and Edwards' son, Jonathan Edwards the younger.

CHAPTER XV

New England

The Revolt Against Puritanism

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WHEN, IN THE EARLY SPRING OF 1758, JONATHAN EDWARDS was buried in the old graveyard at Princeton, Puritanism went with him. But it had really been dead many years before. It began to decline as an open force in the life of the Colonies as far back as the last decade of the Seventeenth Century. The writings of the Mathers and the other orthodox divines of their day are full of references to the sinfulnesses of the time, the carefree attitude toward religion, and the disrespect paid to ministers.¹ By the first quarter of the Eighteenth Century things became even more serious. The Puritan theocracy was not only being slighted; its very foundations were being attacked. Three forces worked to bring this about. First, the increasing prosperity of the colonists, and hence the natural growth of a desire among them for a say in the government regardless of religious beliefs or affiliations. As a result we find that in this period, "Wealth replaces real or hypocritical 'godliness' in determining a man's position in the community. Individuals are no longer stretched upon the Procrustean bed of New England Puritanism to ascertain their fitness."² Second, the growing disgust of the people with such things as revivals and the bickerings among the various ecclesiastical parties. Jonathan Edwards' dreadful time with his Northampton parishioners in the last four years of his ministry in that town was only a dramatization of a trend of public opinion that had its roots years back. Third, the rising tide of rationalism and deism, brought about primarily by the increasing sale and discussion here of the works of such liberal continental thinkers as Locke, Sidney and Cumberland in England, and Pufendorf in Germany. This tide of Liberalism eventually moved the center of intellectual interest from theology to politics, and thus helped bring on the Revolution.

¹ There is a fine discussion on this point in Chapter IV, "The Fall of the Wilderness Zion," in "The First Americans," by Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker. N. Y. 1927. This book is volume II in the excellent series, "A History of American Life," edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox.

² "Revolutionary New England." Adams. p. 138.

I. CHARLES CHAUNCEY

The three leaders in the revolt against Puritanism were Charles Chauncey, Samuel Johnson and John Wise. The first sprang from a family held in high esteem both in England and in this country. The first of the line, also a Charles Chauncey, was born in England in 1592, was graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1613, and was driven out of the country by Archbishop Laud in 1637. In the same year he came to New England, and for a time preached in Plymouth and Scituate. On November, 1654, he was elected second president of Harvard, and remained in that post until his death in 1672. He was a man of learning, and a great power among the orthodox Puritans. His son Isaac remained in England, and died a minister there in 1712. One of his children, Charles by name, emigrated to America, and became a prominent Boston merchant, dying in 1711. To him there was born a son on January 1, 1705, to whom was also given the name Charles. He is the subject of the present discussion. He entered Harvard in 1717, was graduated in 1721, and ordained six years later. He was a sickly man, but like most Puritans he married often. "Three times he had to mourn the death of a wife."¹

In his day, as has been said, Puritanism was already on the decline. In 1740, George Whitefield bitterly complained of his American audiences: "The Generality seem to be too much conformed to the World. There's much of the Pride of Life to be seen in their Assemblies. Jewels, Patches, and gay Apparel are commonly worn by the Female Sex, and even the common People, I observed, dressed up in the Pride of Life."² Chauncey did much to accentuate this heresy. Eight months after Whitefield's visit to Boston he preached a sermon entitled, "The New Creature Describ'd, and consider'd as the sure Characteristic of a Man's being in Christ." This was at the Boston Thursday Lecture on June 4, 1741. In it he disputed the importance placed by Whitefield on bodily contortions as a mark of conversion, and presented his own rationalistic views regarding genuine conversion in this manner:

Put the question to your own soul, Have I had experience of such a change as that I can esteem myself a *new creature*?

¹ "Ten New England Leaders," by Williston Walker. p. 272.

² Whitefield's "Seventh Journal." 2nd edition. London. 1744. p. 44.

Have I indeed been *transform'd by the renewing of the Holy Ghost*? How is it with my Apprehensions? . . . What are my tho'ts of sin? Does it seem a slight thing or an accursed evil? What are my thoughts of holiness? Do I entertain a low opinion of it, or does it appear a matter infinitely reasonable and important? What are my thoughts of CHRIST? Do I see no beauty in him for which he should be desired, or does he appear altogether lovely? Can I, in my own apprehensions, do without him, or do I see the need, the absolute need I stand in of him, and that there is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby I can be saved? . . . And how is it with my AFFECTIONS? On what are they plac'd, and after what manner are they exercis'd? Whom do I love most, GOD or the world? Which do I fear most, the anger of GOD, or outward losses and crosses? What grieves me most, the frowns of the world, or the want of GOD'S favour? Which do I place my hope most in, the things of time, or the things of eternity? And how is it as to my LIFE and MANNERS? . . . Have I turn'd to GOD in CHRIST? And is it my daily constant endeavour to live to GOD? Is it conform'd to the example of CHRIST? Is it a just transcript of the precepts of the gospel? am I pious towards GOD? Am I righteous towards men? Am I sober in respect to myself? ¹

Chauncey wrote three more works on the same subject. The first two were sermons: "The Out-pouring of the Holy Ghost. A Sermon preach'd in Boston, May 13, 1742," and "Enthusiasm described and caution'd against," probably delivered in the same year. The third was far more ambitious. It was a reply to Jonathan Edwards' "Some Thoughts Concerning the present Revival of Religion in New England," published in 1742. Chauncey's answer was published the year following, and was entitled, "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England." It is a big book, and full of evidence concerning the extravagances and disorders that accompanied the Great Awakening, and also contains a lengthy historical account of the Antinomian controversy. As a result of it Chauncey's fame spread to England and Scotland. He lived on till 1787, and did much in behalf of greater liberalism, not only in the church, but also in the secular government. He was surely no metaphysical giant as Edwards was,

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 21-22.

and neither was he the supreme scholar of the Eighteenth Century that Professor Walker thinks he was.¹ But he was one of the eloquent apostles of reason in early New England.

2. SAMUEL JOHNSON

Samuel Johnson, of Connecticut, who lived in the years 1696-1772, was the first native herald in the Colonies of the English and German rationalism that was gradually to find favor in this country. As a philosopher he was of modest stature. He was, in many ways, a confused little man. Nevertheless, he was the earliest of indigenous idealists, and did much to implant here the ideas of Bishop Berkeley. Again, he possessed much learning, and helped foster it in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. He was the first president of King's College, N. Y., later renamed Columbia, and wrote the first Hebrew grammar in this country. Finally, he persuaded Berkeley to give money to Yale, which at that time was little more than an advanced grammar school. "How low was the state of education at Yale is expressed in the summary statement of Johnson's earliest biographer, that the metaphysics taught there were not fit for worms."² In 1731 he wrote his first important book, "Introduction to Philosophy." Its purpose was to set forth a whole system of learning in miniature. It was a puerile performance in every way, but its aim and manner of execution were something new in the Colonies. Here was a man whose main interest in writing a book was not to expound some theological point, but to organize all known secular and strictly philosophical knowledge. That Johnson was not up to the task is beside the point.

In 1724 he went to England, and there met Alexander Pope and the English Samuel Johnson. The year following he returned to the Colonies, with his mind aflutter with the latest Continental heresies. He apparently did not understand all he heard and saw abroad, but one thing did leave an impression on his mind, and that was the prevailing rationalism over there. He started spreading his new notions in the Colonies, and as a result was soon driven into an acrimonious

¹ Professor Walker in his "Ten New England Leaders," says of him, "He had none of the intuitive grasp or metaphysical genius of Edwards, but in patient scholarly investigation he had not a superior, and probably not an equal, in Eighteenth Century New England." (p. 272.)

² "American Philosophy. The Early Schools," by I. Woodbridge Riley. N. Y. 1907. p. 64. Chapter II in this book, which is devoted entirely to Johnson, is by far the most comprehensive study of him now in print.

debate with that bitter Calvinist, Jonathan Dickinson, the first president of Princeton, the stronghold at that time, as it is to a lesser degree now, of Presbyterianism. The debate later took the form of a book entitled, "A Letter from Aristocles to Authades concerning the Sovereignty and Promises of God," and was published in Boston in 1745. In it Johnson delivered himself of this gross heresy regarding the doctrine of predestination:

The Doctrine of Divine sovereignty as implying God's eternal, arbitrary and absolute determination of the everlasting fate of his creatures from his mere inner motion and without any consideration of their good and ill behaviour, is contrary to the nature and attributes of God because inconsistent with the very notion of his being a moral governor of the world. For it represents him as laying his creatures under a necessity of being what they are, whether good or bad, and so leaves no room for either virtue or vice, praise or blame, reward or punishment, properly speaking. . . . I cannot think it consistent with the divine attributes, God's wisdom, holiness, justice, etc., to give Being to any of his intelligent creatures without putting them into a condition that would render being desirable to them; nor to put them eternally into a condition that is worse than not to be.¹

The fact that Johnson got away with this doctrine, and lived on for twenty-eight years as a respectable citizen, unmolested by the authorities, is most important. It shows, better than anything else can, the change that had come over the Colonies since the days of Thomas Shepard and John Cotton.

Bishop Berkeley came to Rhode Island in 1729, and Johnson immediately got in touch with him. They corresponded at length, and what thus went on between them² constitutes, in the words of Professor Riley, "the most notable philosophic correspondence that had taken place in the early American schools."³ Johnson, as has been said, was greatly influenced by Berkeley, but he was unable to spread the Berkeleyan idealism much beyond New England. He tried to convert the learned William Burnet, Governor of New York, but was unsuccessful. He had better luck with the Lieut.-Governor, Cad-

¹ *Op. cit.* Letter from Aristocles, written September 10, 1774, pp. 2-8.

² Much of this correspondence, hitherto unpublished, is to be found in Riley's chapter on Johnson. It is of small philosophical value, but of the greatest importance historically.

³ Riley. p. 93.

wallader Colden, a man of singularly open mind. But Colden was not sufficiently interested in the new metaphysics to do any missionary work for it.

In 1746 Johnson wrote a rather elaborate and childish "System of Morality," made up, in the main, of puerile maxims to be good and thrifty and clean. It was published in Boston under Johnson's old pseudonym, Aristocles. Among his other works are "Noetics," a book dealing with the structure of pure intellect, and "Ethics." Both were later combined into one volume under the imposing title, "Elementa Philosophia." It was used in King's College during Johnson's presidency, and also in the philosophy school of the Academy of Philadelphia. Its philosophical value is nil.

3. JOHN WISE

John Wise was one of the greatest men America produced before the Revolution. He was not "the first great American democrat,"¹ as Professor Tyler and others have thought, but he certainly was one of the most puissant of all the apostles of democracy up to his time. He was the first New Englander to break completely with the old theological distinction between the elect and the unregenerate, and he was also the first American to base his arguments for democracy in both church and state upon historical grounds and upon the doctrine of the equality of man.²

Wise's father, Joseph, came to New England as the serving man of a Dr. Alcock, but finally managed to free himself. John was the fifth of thirteen children, and was baptised on July 15, O. S. 1652. The exact date of his birth is not known, and neither is very much of his early life. He was raised in Roxbury, Mass., and had for his pastor John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians. He entered Harvard in 1669, was graduated in 1673, and took his master's degree two years later. For the next three years he preached in and around Boston, and in 1678 married one Abigail Gardner. In 1680 he became minister of the

¹ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 115. See also "The Founder of American Democracy," by J. M. Mackaye *The New England Magazine*. September 1903. New Series. Vol. 29. No. 1.

² It is curious to note in this connection that the Fourteenth Edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* does not give as much as a line to Wise, while it devotes several pages to the Mathers and lesser Puritans. The Beards and Professor Channing give Wise little more than cursory mention in their respective histories.

Second Church at Ipswich and remained in that post till his death in 1725.

He first came into the public eye in 1687, when he advised his parishioners to refuse to pay the province-tax imposed upon them by the Governor, Sir Edmund Andros. For this he was arrested, deposed from the ministry, lodged in jail for three weeks awaiting trial, denied the writ of habeas corpus, and fined £50 and costs. His parishioners paid the fine. Two years later, when Governor Andros was recalled, Wise returned to his parish. In 1690 he joined the disastrous expedition to Quebec under the command of Sir William Phipps, serving as chaplain, and distinguishing himself in the field. He also performed good service on the far more dangerous battlefield at home during the witchcraft craze, which he denounced openly. He was certainly no friend of Cotton Mather, but when the latter made efforts to introduce inoculation for smallpox in 1721, Wise was one of his few supporters. Physically, he was a tall man, and an expert wrestler. He towered over six feet, and was the terror of all the hoodlums in his neighborhood.

The two books upon which Wise's fame rests, and for which he will be remembered as long as the heroic struggle of the Colonies for independence of mind and of government is remembered, are "The Churches Quarrel Espoused," and "A Vindication of the Government of the New England Churches." The first dealt the death blow to the Puritan theocracy, and the second sounded the note of the Revolution. Both also contain some of the clearest and most effective prose written anywhere in the Colonies before the time of Jefferson and John Woolman.

On November 5, 1705, there was issued in Boston, more or less surreptitiously, a small book bearing the unassuming title of "Questions and Proposals." It was probably the work of the two Mathers and their admirers. It called for a closer union of the churches, and for more centralized control by the association of ministers. In short, it was a head-on attack against the very foundations of the Congregationalism on the basis of which the Colonies were originally founded. It was this onslaught that Wise answered with the two counterblasts aforementioned. The first of them dealt with the matter primarily as a church debate. Its full title is "The Churches Quarrel Espoused: or a Reply In Satyre, to contain Proposals made, in Answer to this Question, What further Steps are to be taken, that the Councils may

have due Constitution and Efficacy in Supporting, Preserving, and Well-Ordering the Interest of the Churches in the Country." It was first published in 1710, and reissued five years later. It is full of good invective and satire.

The "Epistle Dedicatory" gives the tone of what follows:

In general, my Advise is to you, That in good order, and with all Gracefulness which becomes Wise Men, you will with Zeal, Courage and Faithfulness, Stand in the Defense of, and Maintain your *Church Liberties*; God certainly obliges you to do it, with all the discretion and bravery of Spirit, which becomes free-men, in withstanding Vassalage or a Servile State, *Gal. 5. 1, 13. Stand fast therefore in the Liberties wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not Intangled again with the Yoke of Bondage.*¹

Wise then lays down this law regarding church government, calling upon history to bear him witness:

It is most apparent through the whole Ministry of the World (unless in absolute Monarchies) that it is the duty of all Publick Officers, to Minister according to the plain Rules of the Publick State, and not by their own Phancy or Wills, and so in this case, the chief Rulling Officer or Officers (then in being) *In point of Conduct are obliged to lead the Church* in their Operation, according to the Churches plain and settled Principles, and not reluct because their own persuasions do otherwise incline them; It is now too late for any Officer to pretend Conscience against Established Rules.²

He then plunges into the body of his argument, and raises havoc with the claims of the Mathers and their clique. He first warns them that "Justice . . . is no Respector of Persons; for that it is Superiour to all men, and sits as a veiled Empress, holding the Ballance to weigh out equal to each one according to the Merits of the Cause, and sees no man."³ He continues with this piece of mighty satire:

There is also something in it, which *Smells very strong of the Infallible Chair*, To Assume the Power of making Rules, to In-

¹ *Op. cit.* Second edition, 1715. p. 6.

² *Ibid.* p. 19.

³ *Ibid.* p. 27.

gross all Principles of Process, the Right of Election, the last Appeal, the Negative Vote, and all Superintending Power in Matters Ecclesiastick, as the Prerogatives of Clergymen distinct from all other Estates, and Ministers in Government; or thus, for the Clergy to Monopolize both the Legislative and Executive part of Canon Law, is but a few steps from the Chair of Universal Pestilence, and by the Ladder here set up, *Clergymen* may, if they please, Clamber thus high; for when they are invested with what is in these Proposals provided and intended for them, who then controul them, but the Almighty himself? as was said of those daring men, *Gen. 11. 6*. And now nothing will be Restrained from them, which they have imagined to do; for who can now with-hold from them Infallibility, or stop the direful and definitive Sentence? Who can limit their Power, or shorten their Arm in their Executions? Their Bulls can now upon any front Bellow and Thunder out a thousand terrible Curses; & the poor and affrighted & Invassl'd Layety, both Princes & Subjects (being here as in the grave, put under one and the same Topick) must forfeit their Salvation, if they don't tamely submit, & obediently become their Executioners; for that it is now evident, that all Power is, if not really given, yet formally stollen, and in intent Bequeathed to them.¹

Excellent as is "The Churches Quarrel Espoused," "A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches" is even better. It takes its place with Roger Williams' "The Bloody Tenent" and "The Bloudy Tenent yet more Bloudy" as one of the three political masterpieces of pre-Revolutionary America. It was first published in 1717, and its full title is "A Vindication of the Government of New-England Churches. Drawn from Antiquity; the Light of Nature; Holy Scripture; its Noble Nature; and from the Dignity Divine Providence has put upon it." Wise showed plainly in it that he belonged to the school of Locke, but there is no evidence that he knew of him, at least not at the time he wrote the book. He probably got most of his ideas from the German Pufendorf, to whom Locke himself was indebted. Pufendorf had published his colossal "De Jure Naturae et Gentium" in 1672, and Wise seems to have been the only American in his day who read it. He says at the beginning of the "Vindication," "I shall Principally take Baron Pufendorf for my Chief Guide and Spokes-man."²

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 39-40.

² *Op. cit.* p. 32.

Wise put a tremendous amount of learning into this book, but what is more important is the fact that he argues wholly on the basis of history and reason. I quote:

I shall consider Man in a state of Neutral Being, as a Free-Born Subject under the Crown of Heaven, and owing Homage to none but God himself. It is certain Civil Government in General, is a very Admirable Result of Providence, and in Incomparable Benefit to Man-kind, yet must needs be acknowledged to be the Effect of Humane Free Compacts and not of Divine Institution; it is the Produce of Mans Reason, of Humane and Rational Combinations, and not from any direct Orders of Infinite Wisdom, in any positive Law wherein is drawn up this or that Scheme of Civil Government. Government (says the Lord Warrington) is necessary — in that no Society of Men can subsist without it; and that Particular Form of Government is necessary which best suits the Temper and Inclination of a People. Nothing can be Gods Ordinance, but what he has particularly Declared to be such; there is no particular Form of Civil Government described in Gods Word, neither does nature prompt it. The Government of the *Jews* was changed five Times. Government is not formed by Nature, as other Births or Productions; If it were, it would be the same in all countries; because Nature keeps the same Method, in the same thing, in all climates.¹

This theme of natural rights — a new and revolutionary one, be it remembered, in the thinking of the New Englanders — he repeats throughout the book, with mounting vigor. For example:

(a) And for every Man must be conceived to be perfectly in his own Power and disposal, and not to be controuled by the Authority of any other. And thus every Man, must be acknowledged equal to every Man, since all Subjection and all Command are equally banished on both sides; and considering all Men thus at Liberty, every Man has a Prerogative to Judge for himself, *viz.* What shall be most for his Behoof, Happiness and Well-being. As *Ulpian* says, *by a Natural Right all Men are born free*; and Nature having set all Men upon a Level and made them Equals, no Servitude or Subjection can be conceived without Inequality. . . .²

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 33.

² *Ibid.* pp. 42-43.

(b) It must needs be allowed, as a fundamental Principle relating to Government, that (under God) all Power is Originally in the People.¹

Every now and then Wise digresses into a bit of philosophical speculation as to the origin of government. In the light of modern research what he has to say is quite absurd; nevertheless for his day it was novel, rational, and what is more important, bold.

So that though Man is inclined to Society, yet he is driven to a Combination by great necessity. For that the true and leading Cause of forming Governments, and yielding up Natural Liberty, and throwing Man's Equality into a Common Pile to be new Cast by the Rules of fellowship; was really and truly to guard themselves against the Injuries men were lyable to Interchangeably; for none so Good to Man, as Man, and yet none a greater Enemy. So that,

2. The first Humane Subject and Original of Civil Power is the People. For as they have a Power every Man over himself in a Natural State, so upon a Combination they can and do bequeath this Power unto others; and settle it accordingly as their united discretion shall determine. For what is very plain, that when the Subject of Sovereign Power is quite Extinct that Power returns to the People again. And when they are free, they may set up what species of Government they please; or if they rather incline to it, they may subside into a State of Natural Being, if it be plainly for the best. . . .

3. The formal Reason of Government is the Will of a Community, yielded up and surrendered to some other Subject, either of one particular Person, or more.²

Wise then goes into a thorough examination of the three forms of government, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, and naturally comes to the conclusion that "A Democracy . . . is . . . the most Ancient (and) the most probable. . . ."³ And he adds these prudent words:

It is certainly a great Truth, *fcil.* That Mans Original Liberty after it is Resigned, (yet under due Restrictions) ought to be Cherished in all wise Governments; or otherwise a man in making

¹ *Ibid.* p. 71.

² *Ibid.* pp. 43-44.

³ *Ibid.* p. 47.

himself a Subject, he alters himself from a Freeman, into a Slave, which to do is Repugnant to the Law of Nature. Also the Natural Equality of Men amongst Men must be duly favoured; in that Government was never Established by God or Nature, to give one Man a Prerogative to insult over another; therefore in a Civil, as well as in the Natural State of Being, a just Equality is to be indulged so far as that every Man is bound to Honour every Man, which is agreeable both with Nature and Religion, 1 Pet. 2. 17. *Honour all Men.* — The End of good Government is to cultivate Humanity, and Promote the happiness of all, and the good of every Man in all his Rights, his Life, Liberty, Estate, Honour, &c. without injury or abuse done to any.¹

Wise's books bring out two things very clearly: First, the manner in which political thinking grew out of ecclesiastical thinking, and how the struggle for democracy in the church government led to a demand for democracy in the secular government. Second, the gradual emergence of a new form of argument in public controversies, the argument from natural laws and from reason.

It is easy to see why Wise's writings were in such great demand during the Revolutionary days.² They embodied the very principles of the conflict, and they did so in eloquent style. But it is an exaggeration to say of him, especially of "A Vindication of the Government of New England Churches," that "the essay marks him as the earliest political philosopher in America, and in it the sentiments of the Declaration of Independence are expressed in language as clear and as strong as in that of Jefferson's famous document. Written sixty years before the Declaration and a generation before the essays of Hume and Montesquieu discussed the grounds of civil government, the views which he so boldly set forth were shared perhaps by Locke and Pufendorf alone among the thinkers of the age, and neither of these philosophers anticipated the spirit or justified the armed resistance of the Revolution as did Wise."³ Thomas Hooker and Roger Williams were surely no mean political philosophers, and they lived before Wise. Again, "the argument from natural rights was well known in 1772, and it was to Locke and not to Wise that men like Samuel Adams turned for

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 60-61.

² During the Revolution two special editions of his two books were published, of 500 copies each, and both were sold out at once.

³ "The Founder of American Democracy," by J. M. Mackaye. *The New England Magazine*. September, 1903. New Series. Vol. xxix. No. 1. p. 81.

help.”¹ Nevertheless, Wise was the first American to make full and extensive use of the doctrine of natural rights in the demand for political democracy, and he did so in a manner that marks him as one of the ablest writers of the pre-Revolutionary era. He was one of the three or four genuinely great men of colonial America. He heralded the dawn of a new and better day, a day when ecclesiasticism was put in the background and rationalism was put in the saddle.

¹ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 123.

CHAPTER XVI

New England

Other Prose Writers

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Other Prose Writers

I. SAMUEL SEWALL

SAMUEL SEWALL WAS ONE OF THE MOST PICTURESQUE CHARACTERS of colonial New England. He surely was not the great man Tyler thinks he was,¹ but he did possess administrative ability, and there was courage in him far beyond that of the ordinary man. He was one of that large and ever-present class of conscientious, though not brilliant, public servants, whose sturdy common sense is perhaps the strongest safeguard of good government.

He was born in Bishopstoke, Hampshire, on March 28, 1652, and was brought to Boston on July 6, 1661. He was graduated from Harvard ten years later, in a class of eleven. For the next year or so he was Resident Fellow, and was soon also made keeper of the college library. On February 28, 1676, he married Hannah Hull, of Boston, the daughter of the New England mint-master. He thus freed himself of all financial worries for the rest of his life. By Hannah he had seven sons and seven daughters, but only three of them survived him. Hannah died in 1717, so he married again two years later. He lived with his second wife only one year, when she died too, and in the same year of her death he married for the third time, a widow, Mrs. Mary Gibbs.

He did not enter the ministry immediately after his graduation from Harvard, but went into business with his father-in-law, and on the side did some trading in lands and cattle.² In 1681 he was appointed master of the public printing press. Three years before he had been made a freeman, as the result of joining the Old South Church. Then began his long life in the service of the state. He was a deputy to the

¹ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 99.

² "Samuel Sewall and the World He Lived In," by N. H. Chamberlain. Boston. 1897. pp. 92-93. Also "The Puritanism of Samuel Sewall as Shown in his Diary & Letters." A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculties of the Graduate School of Arts & Letters in Candidacy for the degree of Master of Arts (Department of English), by Merle Everett Chapin. Chicago. June, 1914. pp. 1-19. The Chamberlain book is the only biography of Sewall in print. Parrington's statement, Volume I, p. 400, that "no life has been written" is wrong.

General Court, for a long time was captain in the militia, and was a member of the Boston Fire Department and of the Police & Watch. In 1692 he was appointed to the colonial Superior Court, and twenty-six years later became its chief justice. He resigned this position in 1728, and died in 1730.

Sewall's part in the witchcraft delusion was a brief but sad one. He was one of the judges who pronounced sentence on numerous innocent persons, and the fact worried him to the end of his days. He was, indeed, so ashamed of it that he made very little mention of the frenzy even in his Diary. "With the exception of an entry on April 11, there are no entries in Sewall's Diary for the three months of April, May and June (1689), when the excitement was at its height. The entries elsewhere in his journal touching this matter are few, and generally very brief. He evidently was ashamed, cast down, full of sorrow, and probably afraid of personal prosecution and loss of property at the hands of the survivors suing for damages. . . . The court he belonged to was no doubt illegal, and its proceedings, as judged by the ethics of English law, more than questionable."¹

Sewall's apology for the rôle he played in the witch hunt was a singularly moving and courageous document. It follows in full:

Copy of the Bill I put up on the Fast day; giving it to Mr. Willard as he pass'd by, and standing up at the reading of it, and bowing when finished; in the Afternoon.

"Samuel Sewall, sensible of the reiterated strokes of God upon himself and family; and being sensible, that as to the guilt contracted upon the opening of the late Commision of Oyer and Terminer at Salem (to which the order for this Day relates) he is, upon many accounts, more concerned than any that he knows of, Desires to take the Blame and shame of it, Asking pardon of men, And especially desiring prayers that God, who has an Unlimited Authority, would pardon that sin and all other sins; personal and Relative; And according to his Infinite Benignity, and Sovereignty, Not Visit the sin of him or of any other, upon himself or any of his, nor upon the Land: But that He would powerfully defend him against all Temptations to Sin, for the

¹ Chamberlain. p. 168. Mr. Chapin, in his monograph, p. 44, says that Sewall makes only eighteen references to the witchcraft trials in his Diary and Letter Book.

future and vouchsafe him the efficacious, saving Conduct of his World and Spirit.”¹

This confession was the more bold in view of the fact that nobody else of his high public position would follow suit. “It has been traditionally received — no record of the fact from his own pen is known to us — that the Chief Judge on the trials, Lieut. Gov. Stoughton, when informed of what Sewall had done, said that he had no such confession to make, as he had acted according to the best light which God had given him.”²

Sewall was the first New Englander of prominence to come out against slavery, and he did so with at least as much eloquence as the Abolitionists of pre-Civil War days. Strangely enough, James Truslow Adams and the Beards and Professor T. J. Wertenbaker make no mention of this phase of his activity in their studies of early America. Professor Parrington does mention it, but in commenting on it, makes the wholly unfounded statement that it has been “overpraised by historians.”³ The truth is that not only have historians not overpraised it; they have almost unanimously ignored it.

Sewall’s antislavery tract is entitled “The Selling of Joseph, A Memorial,” and was published by Bartholomew Green and John Allen in Boston on June 24, 1700. The following is a fair measure of its vigor, logic, and kindliness:

Forasmuch as Liberty is in real value next unto life: None ought to part with it themselves, or deprive others of it, but upon most mature Consideration.

It is most certain that all Man, as they are the the Sons of Adam, are Coheirs, and have equal Right unto Liberty, and all

¹ Sewall’s complete Diary and other writings form Vols. V, VI, and VII in the Collections of the Mass. Hist. Society, Fifth Series. Vol. V covers the period from December 3, 1673, to December 28, 1699, and was published by the Society in Boston, 1878. Vol. VI covers the period from January 14, 1700, to April 14, 1717, and was published by the Society in Boston, 1879. This volume also contains some of Sewall’s longer political writings. Vol. VII covers the period from May 10, 1714, to October 13, 1729, and was published by the Society in Boston, 1882. The name of the editor of the whole series is not given. Hereafter these three volumes will be referred to as Diary Vol. I, Diary Vol. II, and Diary Vol. III. The witchcraft confession appears in Diary Vol. I, p. 445. The fast day referred to was January 14, 1697, appointed by the General Court on account of what might have been done amiss “in the late tragedy, raised among us by Satan and his instruments, through the awful judgment of God.” (Diary Vol. I. Footnote 1.) There is a gap in the Diary from July, 1677, to March, 1684–1685, probably by loss of MSS., or it may be due to Sewall’s carelessness. He skips numerous days even in the extant MSS.

² Diary Vol. I. p. 446. Footnote 1, extended from p. 445.

³ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 95.

other outward Comforts of life. *GOD hath given the Earth* (with all its Commodities) *unto the Sons of Adam, Psal 115.16. And hath made of One Blood, all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, and hath determined the Times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: That they should seek the Lord.* Forasmuch then as we are the Offspring of GOD &c. *Act. 17.26, 27, 29. . . through the Indulgence of God to our First Parents after the Fall, the outward Estate of all and every of their Children, remains the same, as to one another. So that Originally, and Naturally, there is no such thing as Slavery. Joseph was rightfully no more a Slave to his Brethren, than they were to him: and they had no more Authority to Sell him, than they had to Slay him. And if they had nothing to do to Sell him; the Ishmaelites bargaining with them, and paying down Twenty pieces of Silver, could not make a Title. Neither could Potiphar have any better Interest in him than the Ishmaelites had. Gen. 37. 20, 27, 28. For he that shall in this case plead Alteration of Property, seems to have forfeited a great part of his own claim to Humanity. There is no proportion between Twenty Pieces of Silver, and LIBERTY. The Commodity in itself is the Claimer. If Arabian Gold be imported in any quantities, most are afraid to meddle with it, though they might have it at easy rates; lest if it should have been wrongfully taken from the Owners, it should kindle a fire to the Consumption of their whole Estate. 'Tis pity there should be more caution used in buying a horse, or a little lifeless dust; than there is in purchasing Men and Women: Whenas they are the Offspring of GOD, and their Liberty is,*

. . . Auro pretiosior Amni. . . .

And all things considered, it would conduce more to the Welfare of the Province, to have White Servants for a Term of Years, than to have Slaves for Life. Few can endure to hear of a Negro's being made free; and indeed they can seldom use their freedom well; yet their continual aspiring after their forbidden Liberty, renders them unwilling Servants. . . .

These *Ethiopians*, as black as they are; seeing they are the Sons and Daughters of the First *Adam*, the Brethren and Sisters of the last *ADAM*, and the Offspring of *GOD*; They ought to be treated with a Respect Agreeable.¹

¹ This anti-slavery tract is reprinted in full in *Diary* Vol. II. Footnote 1, p. 16, extending to p. 20.

Sewall wrote many political and religious tracts, but today he is remembered for only two books: "Phaenomena Quaedam Apocalyp-tica," an ambitious theological study in which he tried to prove that America was the final rendezvous of Gog and Magog, and his celebrated Diary. The first need hardly concern us. It is no more than a feeble imitation of the first portions of Cotton Mather's "Magnalia," and is wholly devoid of that great divine's dialectical powers. Sewall was incapable of any intricate reasoning, even of the ordinary legal variety. Though he occupied a high judicial position in his State for many years, he had never received any preliminary training in the law, and read very little in the subject. He was teased on that account by some of his friends, but the fact did not bother him.¹

The Diary is a different matter. It is the only extensive early New England diary in existence. As Mr. Chamberlain has said, "We have no other book like it; perhaps no other storehouse of old ways and social life so abundant as it."² It is the product of a kindly, pleasant and helpful Yankee, religious but not to the point of denying the demands of his two hundred pounds of flesh, Puritanical but not a Cotton Mather, and extremely thrifty — in short, a sort of *Ur-Babbitt*. There is nothing in it about the natural beauties of New England, but it is full of accounts of lightnings, hail-storms and eclipses of the moon, with the usual Puritan theological implications. Neither is there any humor in the book, but that can hardly be held against Sewall. Not one of the Puritans was capable of laughter. Thomas Morton was, but he was not a Puritan. Here are some of the more prosaic passages in the Diary:

Thomas Sargeant was examined by the Corporation of Harvard: finally, the advice of Mr. Danforth, Mr. Stoughton, Mr. Thatcher, Mr. Mather (then present) was taken. This was his sentence.

That being convicted of speaking blasphemous words against the H. G. he should be therefore publicly whipped before all the Scholars. 2. That he should be suspended as to taking his degree of Bachelour (this sentence read before him twice at the Pr^{ts}. before the committee, and in the library 1 up before execution.) 3. Sit alone by himself in the Hall uncovered at meals, during the pleasure of the President and Fellows, and be in all things obedient, doing what exercise was appointed him by the President, or

¹ Diary Vol. I. p. 419.

² Chamberlain. p. viii.

else be finally expelled the college. The first was presently put in execution in the Library (Mr. Danforth, Jr. being present) before the Scholars. He kneeled down and the instrument Goodman Hely attended the President's word as to the performance of his part in the work. Prayer was had before and after by the President.

July 1, 1674. Sir Thatcher Commonplac'd, Justification was his head. He had a solid good piece: stood above an hour, and yet brake of before he came to any use. By reason that there was no warning given, none (after the undergraduates) were present, save Mr. Dan Gookin, Sr. the President and myself.

July 3, 1674. N. B. Mr. Gookin, Jr. was gone a fishing with his brothers.

Had my hair cut by Goodman Barret, July 6. . . .¹

Saturday Even. Aug. 12, 1676, just as prayer ended Tim. Dwight sank down in a Swoun, and for a good space was as if he perceived not what was done to him: after, kicked and sprawled, knocking his hands and feet upon the floor like a distracted man. Was carried pick-pack to bed by John Alcock, there his cloaths pulled off. In the night it seems he talked of ships, his master, father, and unckle Eliot. The Sabbath following Father went to him, spake to him to know what ailed him, asked if he would be prayed for, and for what he would desire his friends to pray. He answered, for more sight of sin, and God's healing grace. I asked him, being along with him, whether his troubles were from some outward cause or spiritual. He answered, spiritual. I asked him why then he could not tell it his master, as well as any other, since it is the honour of any man to see sin and be sorry for it. He gave no answer, as I remember. Asked him if he would go to meeting. He said, 'twas in vain for him; his day was out. I asked, what day: he answered, of Grace. I told him 'twas sin for any one to conclude themselves Reprobate, that this was all one. He said he would speak more, but could not, &c. Notwithstanding all this Semblance (and such more than is written) of compunction for Sin, 'tis to be feared that his troubles arose from a maid whom he passionately loved: for that when Mr. Dwight and his master had agreed to let him goe to her, he eftsoons grew well. . . .²

Tuesday, Jan. 18, 168⁶/₇. Between two and three in the Afternoon, for near an hour together, was seen in a clear Skie such a

¹ Diary Vol. I. pp. 3-4.

² Diary Vol. I. pp. 15-16.

Rainbow, Parelions and Circles as ware on Jan. 2, 168 $\frac{1}{2}$. In the night following falls a snow, not much. I was at the end North-end when I first saw it. People were gazing at it from one end of the Town to tother. . . .

Thursday, January 20. Mr. Lee preaches the Lecture. Eccles. 7.13. From whence exhorted to Quietness under god's hand: about middle of Sermon fire was cry'd, which made a great disturbance, by many rushing out. 'Twas only a chimney I think. Spake of the inverted Rainbow, God shooting at sombody. And that our Times better than the former, and expected better still, Turks going down, a sign on't: Jews call'd, and to inhabit Judea and old Jerusalem.¹

Of the Puritan opposition to the wearing of wigs there is probably more evidence in Sewall's Diary than in any other contemporary writing. His most amusing reference to it is the following:

Tuesday, June 10th. Having last night heard that Josiah Willard had cut off his hair (a very full head of hair) and put on a Wigg, I went to him this morning. Told his Mother what I came about, and she call'd him. I enquired of him what Extremity had forced him to put off his own hair, and put on a Wigg? He answered, none at all. But said that his Hair was streight, and that it parted behinde. Seem'd to argue that men might as well shave their hair off their head, as off their face. I answered men were men before they had hair on their faces, (half of mankind have never any). God seems to have ordain'd our Hair as a Test, to see whether we can bring our minds to be content to be at his finding, or whether we would be our own Carvers, Lords, and come no more at Him. If we disliked our Skin, or Nails; 'tis no thanks to us, that for all that, we cut them not off; Pain and danger restrain us. Your Calling is to teach men self Denial. Twill be displeasing and burdensom to good men: And they that care not what men think of them care not what God thinks of them. Father, Bro. Simon, Mr. Pemberton, Mr. Wigglesworth, Oakes, Noyes (Oliver), Brattle of Cambridge their example. Allow me to be so far a *Censor Morum* for this end of the Town. Pray'd him to read the Tenth Chapter of the Third book of Calvin's Institutions. I read it this morning in course, not of choice. Told

¹ Diary Vol. I. p. 165.

him that it was condemn'd by a Meeting of Ministers at Northampton in Mr. Stoddard's house, when the said Josiah was there. Told him of the Solemnity of the Covenant which he and I had lately enterd into, which put me upon discoursing to him. He seem'd to say would leave off his Wigg when his hair was grown. I spake to his Father of it a day or two after: He thank'd me that had discoursed his Son, and told me that when his hair was grown to cover his ears, he promis'd to leave off his Wigg. If he had known of it, would have forbidden him. His Mother heard him talk of it; but was afraid positively to forbid him; lest he should do it, and so be more faulty.¹

The most entertaining section of the whole Diary is that dealing with Sewall's courtship of Madame Winthrop. It took place in the Winter of 1720, after the death of his second wife. He was three months seeking her hand, but got very little encouragement from the obstinate lady, and finally gave her up in anger.

8r. 11th. I writ a few Lines to Madam Winthrop to this purpose: "Madam, These wait on you with Mr. Mayhew's Sermon, and Account of the state of the Indians on Martha's Vinyard. I thank you for your Unmerited Favours of yesterday; and hope to have the Happiness of Waiting on you to-morrow before Eight a-clock after Noon. I pray GOD to keep you, and give you a joyfull entrance upon the Two Hundred and twenty ninth year of Christopher Columbus his Discovery; and take Leave, who am, Madam, your humble Servt. S. S.

Sent this by Deacon Green, who deliver'd it to Sarah Chickering, her Mistress not being at home. [The next day he calls himself.] . . .

Mrs. Anne Cotton came to door (twas before 8.) said Madam Winthrop was within, directed me into the little Room, where she was full of work behind a Stand; Mrs. Cotton came in and stood. Madam Winthrop pointed to her to set me a Chair. Madam Winthrop's Countenance was much changed from what 'twas on Monday, look'd dark and lowering. At last, the work, (black stuff or Silk) was taken away, I got my Chair in place, had some Converse, but very Cold and indifferent to what 'twas before. Ask'd her to acquit me of Rudeness if I drew off her Glove.

¹ Diary Vol. II. p. 32.

Enquiring the reason, I told her twas great odds between handling a dead Goat, and a living Lady. Got it off. I told her I had one Petition to ask of her, that was, that she would take off the Negative she laid on me the third of October; She readily answered she could not, and enlarg'd upon it; She told me of it so soon as she could; could not leave her house, children, neighbours, business. I told her she might do some Good to help and support me. Mentioning Mrs. Gookin, Nath, the widow Weld was spoken of; said I had visited Mrs. Denison. I told her Yes! Afterward I said, if after a first and second Vagary she would Accept of me returning, Her Victorious Kindness and Good Will would be very Obliging. She thank'd me for my Book, (Mr. Mayhew's Sermon), But said not a word of the Letter. When she insisted on the Negative, I pray'd there might be no more Thunder and Lightning, I should not sleep all night. I gave her Dr. Preston, The Church's Marriage and the Church's Carriage, which cost me 6s. at the Sale. . . . In some of our Discourse, I told her I had rather go to the Stone-House adjoining to her, than to come to her against her mind. Told her the reason why I came every other night was lest I should drink too deep draughts of Pleasure. She had talk'd of Canary, her Kisses were to me better than the best Canary. Explain'd the expression Concerning Columbus. . . .

Octobr. 24. I went in the Hackny Coach through the Common, stop'd at Madam Winthrop's (had told her I would take my departure from thence). Sarah came to the door with Katee in her Arms: but I did not think to take notice of the Child. Call'd her Mistress. I told her, being encourag'd by David Jeffries loving eyes, and sweet Words, I was come to enquire whether she could find in her heart to leave that House and Neighbourhood, and go and dwell with me at the South-end; I think she said softly, Not yet. . . .

Monday, Novr. 7th. My Son pray'd in the Old Chamber. Our time had been taken up by Son and Daughter Cooper's Visit; so that I only read the 130th and 143. Psalm. Twas on Account of my Courtship. I went to Mad. Winthrop; found her rocking her little Katee in the Cradle. I excus'd my Coming so late (near Eight). She set me an arm'd Chair and Cusheon; and so the Cradle was between her arm'd Chair and mine. Gave her the remnant of my Almonds; She did not eat of them as before; but

laid them away. I said I came to enquire whether she had alter'd her mind since Friday, or remained of the same mind still. She said, Thereabouts. I told her I loved her, and was so fond as to think that she loved me: She said she had a great respect for me. I told her, I had made her an offer, without asking any advice; she had so many to advise with, that twas a hindrance. The Fire was come to one short Brand besides the Block, which Brand was set up in end; at last it fell to pieces, and no Recruit was made. She gave me a Glass of Wine. I think I repeated again that I would go home and bewail my Rashness in making more haste then good Speed. I would endeavor to contain myself, and not go on to solicit her to do that which she could not Consent to. Took leave of her. As came down the steps she bid me have a Care. Treated me courteously. Told her she had enter'd the 4th year of her Widowhood. I had given her the *News-Letter* before: I did not bid her draw off her Glove as sometime it had been. Jehovah jireh!

Midweek, 9r. 9th. Dine at Bror. Stoddard's: were so kind as to enquire of me if they should invit Mdm. Winthrop; I answered No. . . .¹

On March 29, 1772, Sewall married the widow, Mrs. Merry Gibbs. She survived him.

Mr. Chamberlain compares Sewall the diarist with Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, and says, "With these two Englishmen, in due time, by a well-weighed and just verdict, Samuel Sewall will be associated in the same lasting fame."² This is going a little too far. Sewall's Diary certainly is amusing reading — perhaps the most amusing book written in all pre-Revolutionary America — and very important as an historical document, but it is a bit ridiculous to rate it with the diary of Pepys. There are whole pages in it that are extremely dull, and throughout it is lacking in humor, the prime requisite of all diaries that pretend to lasting fame. But there is no danger that on that account it will ever sink into oblivion. It will unquestionably live as long as the nation lives, and as long as American historical scholarship lives. In this regard it surely takes as high rank as Winthrop's "Journal" and Bradford's "History."

¹ The whole account of the courtship is given in Diary Vol. II. pp. 260-275.

² Chamberlain. p. vii.

2. SARAH KEMBLE KNIGHT

The only other early New England diarist who deserves mention is Mrs. Sarah Kemble Knight, of Boston. In October, 1704, she made a journey from her home to New York, returning in March of the following year. Day by day she jotted down her experiences in "The Private Journal Kept by Madam Knight." It was not published until 1825, under the editorship of Theodore Dwight, of New York. It is only sixty-one pages long. All the historians of colonial literature, from Tyler down,¹ have praised it. It is difficult to understand why. It says very little about the people she met and the places she passed through. The poetry in it is atrocious. Here is how Mrs. Knight says it was getting dark:

Now was the Glorious Luminary, wth his swift Coursers arrived
at his Stage, leaving poor me wth the rest of this part of the lower
world in darkness, with which *wee* were soon Surrounded.²

This is how she hymns a town she passed through:

*Here stood a Lofty church — there is a steeple,
And there the Grand Parade — O see the people!
That Famouse Castle there, were I but nigh,
to see the mote and Bridg and walls so high —
They'r very fine! sais my deluded eye.*³

One more example. She came to a miserable town where lived miserable people, "and the Impressions their wretchedness formed in me caused mee on y^e very Spott to say:

*Tho Ill at ease, A stranger and alone,
All my fatigu's shall not extort a grone.
These Indigents have hunger with their ease;
Their best is wors behalfe then my disease.
Their Misirable hutt wch Heat and Cold
Alternately without Repulse do hold;*

¹ See Tyler. Vol. II. pp. 96-99. Strangely enough, Professor W. P. Trent in his history, which on the whole is judicious, falls into the same error. See his book, p. 103.

² Dwight edition of the Journal. N. Y. 1825. p. 17.

³ *Ibid.* p. 21.

*Their lodgings thyn and hard, their Indian fare,
 The mean Apparel which the wretches wear,
 And their ten thousand ills wch can't be told,
 Make nature er'e 'tis midle age'd look old.
 When I reflect, my late fatigues do seem
 Only a notion or forgotten Dreem.¹*

3. MINOR PROSE WRITERS

There were other prose writers in New England in the pre-Revolutionary period, but they were not many, and all were far below their predecessors in every respect. The whole era, in fact, was extraordinarily torpid intellectually.² Commerce became the dominant interest, and the writing of books went into decline. A brief review of some of the more prominent of these small fry follows.

Joshua Scottow, a thrifty merchant of Boston, was the author of "Old Men's Tears for their Own Declensions," a collection of puerile observations on the tragedy of old age. A little later he wrote "A Narrative of the Planting of the Massachusetts Colony," from 1628 to the beginning of the Eighteenth Century. Both books are worthless.

Jeremiah Dummer was better educated than Scottow. He was graduated from Harvard in 1699, and later went abroad to study at Utrecht. He returned to New England in 1704, and his orthodoxy soon won the praise of Increase Mather. In October of that year he preached "A Discourse on the Holiness of the Sabbath Day," a dreadful piece of pedantry. The people would not take to him, so in disgust he went to London in 1709, where he endeavored to win fame in the two fields of theology and politics. He failed miserably in both, and died in 1739, a broken-hearted man. While in England he wrote two books dealing with colonial affairs: "A Letter to a Noble Lord concerning the late Expedition to Canada," which was published in London in 1709, and the central argument of which was that the conquest of Canada was of great importance to the British Empire; and "A Defence of the New England Charter," which was put out in London in 1728.

Samuel Penhallow was born in England in 1665, came to this coun-

¹ Dwight edition of the Journal. N. Y. 1825. p. 29.

² See the first two chapters in "Intercolonial Aspects of American Culture on the Eve of the Revolution," by Michael Krause. The Columbia University Press. 1928.

try in 1686, married a wealthy young woman of Portsmouth, N. H., and spent the rest of his days in that town, dying in 1726 as the chief justice of the Colony. In the year of his death he published in Boston "The History of the Wars of New England with the Eastern Indians" from 1703 to 1726. It is no more reliable and no more readable than the book of Indian atrocities compiled fifty years previous by Mary Rowlandson. In 1747 Samuel Niles, a Harvard graduate, published a book of a similar nature entitled, "History of the Indian and French Wars." It is so involved and confused that most of it is unintelligible.

Solomon Stoddard was graduated from Harvard in 1662, and was appointed minister of Northampton seven years later, which post he held till his death in 1730. Apparently he published nothing until the age of fifty, but from then on he wrote extensively on theology. He was fanatically orthodox. His best known book is entitled, "An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience respecting the Country," and was published in Boston in 1722. Some of the questions he posed and answered were: "What right doth belong to the Sabbath?" "At what time of the evening doth the Sabbath begin?" "Is it lawful for men to set their dwelling-houses at such a distance from the place of public worship that they and their families cannot attend it?" "Is it lawful to wear long hair?"¹

Benjamin Colman was born in Boston in 1673, was graduated from Harvard nineteen years later, and spent most of his remaining days writing sermons. He was a cultured man, and could write more or less intelligibly. His best known collection of sermons is entitled, "Discourses upon the Parable of Ten Virgins." John Barnard was a contemporary of his, and of the same type of mind. His two most popular books were "Sermons on Several Subjects," and "The Imperfection of the Creature and the Excellency of the Divine Commandment."

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 4-5.

CHAPTER XVII

New England

The Verse Writers

CHAPTER XVII

The Verse Writers

THE POETRY OF THE TIME WAS EVEN WORSE THAN THE PROSE. That of the preceding period had some trace of grandeur in it, some show of power, however feeble, but the verse of the first half of the Eighteenth Century was lacking in everything. It was of balderdash all compact. Fortunately, not many attempted to express themselves in verse.

I. JOHN SECCOMB

John Seccomb was graduated from Harvard in 1728, was minister of the town of Harvard from 1733 to 1757, and then, for some unknown reason, went to Nova Scotia where he died in 1793. His most celebrated poem was "Father Abbey's Will." It was probably written by him when he was a divinity student at Harvard, and was apparently inspired by the death of Matthew Abdy, a bedmaker and bottlewasher for the college. So popular was it in this country that it was sent over to England where it was published by the two leading London literary magazines, the *London Magazine* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for May 1732. The poem follows in full:

The Last Will of Mr. Matthew A—Y of New-England

<i>To my dear wife</i>	<i>Two painted chairs,</i>
<i>My joy and life,</i>	<i>Nine warden pairs,</i>
<i>I freely now give her</i>	<i>A large old dripping platter,</i>
<i>My whole estate,</i>	<i>The bed of hay</i>
<i>With all my plate,</i>	<i>On which I lay,</i>
<i>Being just about to leave her.</i>	<i>And old sauce-pan for butter.</i>
<i>A tub of soap,</i>	<i>A little mug,</i>
<i>A long cart rope,</i>	<i>A two-quart jug,</i>
<i>A frying pan & kettle,</i>	<i>A bottle full of brandy</i>
<i>An ashen pail,</i>	<i>A looking glass</i>
<i>A threshing flail,</i>	<i>To see your face,</i>
<i>An iron wedge and beetle.</i>	<i>You'll find it very handy.</i>

*A musket true
As ever flew,
A pound of shot & wallet,
A leather sash
My calabash
My powder-horn and bullet.*

*An old sword blade,
A garden spade,
A hoe, a rake, a ladder,
A wooden can,
A close-stool pan,
A clyster-pipe & bladder.*

*A greasy hat,
My old ram-cat,
A yard and half of linnen,
A pot of grease,
A wollen fleece,
In order for your spinning.*

*A small-tooth comb,
An ashen broom,
A candlestick & hatchet,
A coverlid,
Strip'd down with red,
A bag of rags to patch it.*

*A ragged mat,
A tub of fat,
A book put out by Bunyan,
Another book
By Robin Rook
A skain or two of spunyarn.*

*An old black muff,
Some garden stuff,
A quantity of borrage,
Some devil's weed,
And burdock seed,
To season well your porridge.*

*A chafing dish,
With one salt fish,
If I am not mistaken,
A leg of pork,
A broken fork,
And half a flitch of Bacon.*

*A spinning wheel,
One peck of meal,
A knife without a handle,
A rusty lamp,
Two quarts of samp,
And half a tallow candle.*

*My pouch and pipes,
Two oxen tripes,
An oaken dish well carved;
My little dog,
And spotted hog,
With two young pigs just starved.*

*This is my store,
I have no more,
I heartily do give it.
My years are spun,
My days are done,
And so I think to leave it.*

2. JOSEPH GREEN

Joseph Green was born in Boston in 1706, was graduated from Harvard in 1726, and spent many years in his native town as a merchant and distiller. He was a Royalist, so at the outbreak of the

Revolution he fled to England, where he died in 1780. While in Massachusetts he achieved a great reputation as a wit, and used to compose light verse to order. One time, with a number of other Bostonians, he went to call upon a friend, John Checkley by name, who was recovering from a dangerous illness, and was celebrated for his ugly countenance. During the visit it was agreed by all that as a mark of satisfaction over Checkley's recovery his portrait should be painted by one Smibert, and that Green should write some appropriate verses to be used as an inscription. Green, seizing the opportunity to show off his humor, produced this masterpiece:

*John, had thy sickness snatched thee from our sight
And sent thee to the realms of endless night,
Posterity would then have never known
Thine eye, thy beard, thy cowl, and shaven crown;
But now, redeemed by Smibert's faithful hand,
Of immortality secure you stand.
When nature into ruin shall be hurled,
And the last conflagration burn the world,
This piece shall then survive the general evil, —
For flames, we know, cannot consume the Devil.¹*

Another one of his poems is entitled, "An Entertainment for a Winter Evening." It is a satire upon a Masonic celebration in Boston. One of the gentlemen in the line of march was called Pue and was distinguished for his red nose and crude manners. Sang Green of him:

*Who's he come next? 'Tis Pue by name,
Pue by his nose well known to fame;
This, when the generous juice recruits,
Around a brighter radiance shoots.
So, on some promontory's height,
For Neptune's sons the signal light
Shines fair, and fed by unctuous stream
Sends off to sea a livelier beam.²*

¹ "Biographical Sketches of Eminent Lawyers, Statesmen, and Men of Letters," by Samuel L. Knapp. Boston. 1829. p. 135.

² *Op. cit.* Second edition. 1759. p. 13.

3. THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY BALLAD-MONGERS

During the entire colonial age the Americans lived in daily fear of the Indians and the French, and fought innumerable battles with both. Naturally, much of the feeling engendered thus was put into war ballads. Unfortunately, very few of them are extant. Most were printed as broadsides, and disappeared rapidly. A few, however, have been unearthed. They are very bad as poetry, but, on the whole, better than the verse written by non-militant poets. The more important of them are "The Gallant Church," "Smith's Affair at Sidelong Hill," "The Godless French Soldier," and "Lovewell's Farewell."¹ Their authors are all unknown. Here are a few stanzas from "Lovewell's Farewell":

*Of worthy Captain Lovewell I purpose now to sing,
How valiantly he served his country and his King;
He and his valiant soldiers, did range the woods full wide,
And hardships they endured to quell the Indians' pride.*

*'Twas nigh unto Pigwacket, on the eighth day of May,
They spied a rebel Indian soon after break of day;
He on a bank was walking, upon a neck of land,
Which leads into a pond as we're made to understand.*

*Our men to have him and travell'd two miles round,
Until they met the Indian, who boldly stood his ground;
Then spake up Captain Lovewell, "Take you good heed,"
said he,
"This rogue is to decoy us I very plainly see.*

*"The Indians lie in ambush, in some place nigh at hand,
In order to surround us upon this neck of land;
Therefore we'll march in order, and each man leave his pack,
Then we may briskly fight them when they make their attack."*

*They came unto this Indian, who did them thus defy,
As soon as they came nigh him, two guns he did let fly,*

¹ All these ballads and a few more are to be found in "Curiosities of American Literature," by R. W. Griswold. Phila. 1847. There are some also in "Specimens of American Poetry," by Samuel Kettell. Boston. 1829. Vol. I. p. 120 ff.

*Which wounded Captain Lovewell, and likewise one man more,
But when this rogue was running, they laid him in his gore.*

*Then having scalp'd the Indian, they went back to the spot,
Where they had laid their packs down, but there they found
 them not,
For the Indians having spy'd them, when they them down did lay,
Did seize them for their plunder, and carry them away.*

. . .

*Of all our valiant English, there were but thirty-four,
And of the rebel Indians, there were about four score.
And sixteen of our English did safely home return,
The rest were killed and wounded, for which we all must mourn.*

*Our worthy Captain Lovewell among them there did die,
They killed Lt. Robins, and wounded good young Frye,
Who was our English chaplain; he many Indians slew,
And some of them he scalp'd when bullets round him flew. . . .¹*

There is one more ballad of this period that deserves mention. It is "A Whaling Song," by John Osborn of Cape Cod.² It is said to have been very popular among the sailors of the time, and Griswold is the authority for the statement that it was "well-known in the Pacific for more than half a century."³ Here are some stanzas:

*Cape Cod, our dearest native land,
 We leave astern, and lose
Its sinking cliffs and lessening sands,
 While Zephyr gently blows.*

*Bold, hardy men, with blooming age,
 Our sandy shores produce;
With monstrous fish they dare engage,
 And dangerous callings choose.*

. . .

¹ Griswold's "Curiosities of American Literature," p. 27. Griswold sets the date of the composition of this ballad at 1724, but gives no documentary evidence for it. The exact date will probably never be known.

² He was born in 1713, was graduated from Harvard in 1735, and died in 1753.

³ Griswold. p. 32.

*When in our station we are placed,
And whales around us play,
We launch our boats into the main,
And swiftly chase our prey.*

. . .

*A mighty whale we rush upon,
And in our irons throw:
She sinks her monstrous body down
Among the waves below.*

*And when she rises out again,
We soon renew the fight;
Thrust our sharp lances in amain,
And all her rage excite.*

. . .

*She thrashes with her tail around,
And blows her redd'ning breath;
She breaks the air, a deaf'ning sound,
While ocean groans beneath.*

*From numerous wounds, with crimson flood,
She stains the frothy seas,
And gasps, and blows her latest blood,
While quivering life decays.*

*With joyful hearts we see her die,
And on the surface lay;
While all the eager haste apply,
To save our dreadful prey.¹*

The more important of the home-staying poets who essayed martial verse were Joseph Maylem, author of "The Conquest of Louisburg," and "Gallic Perfidy"; John Addams, author of "Poems on Several Occasions"; and the Rev. Mather Byles, the Tory minister of the Hollis Street Church, who was the most important contributor to a strange and worthless volume of verse entitled, "A Collection of Poems by Several Hands," which was published in Boston in 1744.²

¹ Griswold. p. 35.

² The verses of all these poets are reproduced in the Mass. Hist. Soc. Collections. Fifth Series. Vol. IX.

4. “PIETAS ET GRATULATIO”

In October, 1760, George II died, and there ascended to the throne, for the first time since the downfall of the Stuarts, a King who was also a native of England. Naturally, there was great rejoicing in the motherland, and much of it took the form of poetry. The Colonies also caught the enthusiasm, and Harvard College decided to put its best foot forward and show the English poets what the colonists could do. So the entire faculty was set to work mourning, in verse, the passing of the old King, and praising the new. The result was one of the most dreadful books of poetry ever written, almost as bad as the Bay Psalm Book. It was entitled, “*Pietas et Gratulatio Collegii Cantabrigiensis apud Novanglos*,” and was published in Boston in 1761. It contains 106 pages, and is in many ways the most exquisitely made book that has come down to us from colonial times. There are thirty pieces in it, and the authors of all of them, with the exception of Sir Francis Bernard, were scholars of American birth and education. The book must therefore be taken as a gauge of the best poetical abilities of pre-Revolutionary New England. At any rate, it was so considered by the English reviewers, who found much to praise in it,¹ a fact that must be forgiven in view of the circumstances.

Three of the poems are in Greek, sixteen in Latin, and twelve in English. It is only the latter that interest us here. They are so atrociously pedantic and full of such preposterous exaggerations that even a jingler like Joseph Green must have laughed at them. The death of George II, mourns one of the learned versifiers, is a catastrophe of such magnitude that even the forces of nature must be made aware of it:

*thy noontide ray,
Phæbus, suspend; ye clouds, obscure the day;
Her face let Cynthia veil;
Thick darkness spread her wing,
And the night-raven sing;
While Britons their sad fate bewail.*²

¹ The two English reviews appeared in the *Critical Review*, 1763. Vol. 16. pp. 288-289; and in the *Monthly Review*. Vol. 29. pp. 22-28.

² *Op. cit.* p. 17.

The fact is, mourns another poet, that George was the greatest monarch who ever reigned. Caesar and Alexander the Great were nothing compared to him, and Death was extremely brazen in striking him:

*No more let ancient times their heroes boast,
Since all their fame in George's praise is lost;
Not Greece — her Alexanders; Cæsars — Rome.
For worth and virtue, view our monarch's tomb.
Restless ambition dwelt in Cæsar's mind;
He murdered nations and enslaved mankind,
He found a generous people great and free,
And gave them tyrants for their liberty,
The glorious Alexander, half divine,
Whose godlike deeds in ancient records shine,
Dropt his divinity at every feast,
And lost the god and hero in the beast.
Shall, then, our monarch be with these compared?
Or George's glory with a Cæsar shared?
No — we indignant spurn the unworthy claim;
George shines unrivalled in the lists of fame.*

. . .

*Insulting victor! boast this trophy won!
That your broad shade hath darkened Britain's sun;
But, know! such Kings as George but take their way
Through your thick darkness to immortal day.
Indulgent Heaven with splendor rayed him down
To swell the lustry of the British crown;
But virtues, such as his, are not confined
To small domains; they encircle all mankind.
Bourbons to humble, Brunswicks were ordained;
Those mankind's rights destroyed, but these regained.¹*

Fortunately, there is another immortal ascending the throne:

*But say, my muse, say, who is he
Thy scarcely vacant throne who fills?*

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 21-22.

*'Tis he! the heaven-inspired youth!
The falling purple robe who caught,
And all the virtues of the grandsire claims.¹*

Such is the stuff that issued from the temple itself, Harvard College! This is the best that the most accomplished intellects of New England could offer in the way of poetry in pre-Revolutionary New England. “A Whaling Song,” by the poor Cape Cod fisherman, John Osborn, seems like a masterpiece compared to it.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 50.

CHAPTER XVIII

*The Middle and
Southern Colonies*

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The Middle and Southern Colonies

I. THE LESSER LITERATI

BAD AS WERE THE LITERARY LABORS OF THE NEW ENGLANDERS in the fifty years prior to the Revolutionary era, those of the Middle and Southern Colonies were worse. The intellectual temper of all of them continued to be as low in this period as in the Seventeenth Century. Socially, life was more pleasant in them than in New England, but culturally it was considerably inferior.¹

The two Colonies south of New England which had the least to show in the period were New York and New Jersey. Lewis Morris, who was born in New York in 1671, devoted his mature life to public service in both his native Colony and in New Jersey. He was a man of wealth and culture, and did much traveling in the South and in England. He wrote some verse and numerous letters on the political situation in New York and New Jersey. They have all been collected and are now parts of the archives of the two States, but on the whole they are very poor performances. Cadwallader Colden was born in Scotland in 1688. In 1710 he emigrated to America, and settled in Philadelphia for the purpose of practising his profession of medicine. Eight years later he was made surveyor-general of New York. He also served in the King's Council and for a time was Lieutenant-Governor. He remained a Royalist to the end. He was a voluminous writer. He wrote on almost all the sciences: medicine, history, mathematics, geology, botany, optics, zoölogy and agriculture.² But he made no original contribution to any of them. His one book that was not

¹ See "Notes on Early American Literature," by James F. Hunnewell. Reprinted from Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society. April, 1896. Worcester, Mass.; especially p. 10 ff. And also "Intercolonial Relations on the Eve of the Revolution," by Michael Krause. N. Y. 1928. The Introduction.

² The greater part of his MSS. is still unprinted. They are in the possession of the New York Historical Society.

wholly scientific was "The History of the Five Indian Nations," first published in New York in 1727. It deals with the five Indian tribes at the time residing in Northern New York. It is very dull.

Daniel Coxe was a leading politician in New Jersey. In 1722 he published in London a tremendous history of the Carolinas.¹ It deserves no more mention. Jonathan Dickinson was the celebrated Princeton Calvinist whom Edwards succeeded in the presidency of the college. He wrote extensively in defense of orthodoxy, but possessed neither the writing ability nor the mind that Edwards had. He is no more than a name now, and there is no likelihood that he will ever be more. His best known book was, perhaps, "Familiar Letters to a Gentleman, upon a Variety of seasonable and important Subjects in Religion," published in Boston in 1745.

William Livingston was the principal poet that New York produced before the Revolution. He was a lawyer by profession, but also wrote verse and annals. His most celebrated poem was entitled "Philosophic Solitude; or, The Choice of a Rural Life." It was published in New York in 1747 when the author was but twenty-four years old. It is about 700 lines long, and is rubbish from beginning to end. It was obviously an attempt at an imitation of Pope. Its main thesis is that the quiet of rural life is preferable to the bustle of metropolitan life.

*Let ardent heroes seek renown in arms
Pant after fame, and rush to war's alarms;
To shining palaces, let fools resort,
And dunces cringe to be esteemed at court;
Mine be the pleasures of a rural life,
From noise remote, and ignorant of strife;
Far from the painted belle, the white-gloved-beau,
The lawless masquerade and midnight show;
From ladies, lapdogs, courtiers, garters, stars,
Fops, fiddlers, tyrants, Emperors, and Czars.²*

Later on in the poem he lets it be known that he'd also like to have a lot of books around him, and the opportunity to go to church and

¹ Part of its formidable title reads thus: "A Description of the English Province of Carolina, by the Spaniards called Florida, and by the French La Louisiane; as also the great and famous river, Meschacebe or Mississippi . . ."

² *Op. cit.* p. 13.

"mutter o'er a prayer."¹ His most ambitious effort in annal form was entitled, "A Review of the Military Operations in North America." It covers the period from 1753 to 1756. It has some historical value.

William Smith was born in New York in 1728, and was graduated from Yale seventeen years later. He was a Royalist during the Revolution, so he fled to Canada, and died there in 1793. In 1757 he published in London a "History of New York from the First Discovery to the Year 1732." Its sole value lies in the great number of documents quoted in it. "The History of the Colony of Nova Cæsarea, or New Jersey," by his namesake, Samuel Smith, a native of the Colony he wrote about, deserves no comment.

Pennsylvania was generally more cultured in the first half of the Eighteenth Century than either New York or New Jersey, but the original books it produced at the time were little better than those of its two sister Colonies. It really did not become the intellectual center of America till the close of the century.

James Logan, whom William Penn put in charge of the province in 1701, when he left these shores forever, was a man of tremendous learning, and carried on a large correspondence with many of the leading scholars of Europe. He was especially proficient in the classical languages, and translated several Latin masterpieces. His most popular books were "Translation of Cato's Distichs into English" and "M. T. Cicero's Cato Major; or, Discourse on Old Age."² Not much can be said for the writing in either of them.

There was a host of minor writers who are remembered mainly because of the inclusion of their names in Franklin's "Autobiography." Jacob Taylor was a doctor and a poet. He was the author of several poems, among them, "Pennsylvania" and "The Story of Whackum." He died in 1736. Two other poets who lived in the same time were Henry Brooke and Aquila Rose. The latter was the more prolific; all of his verses were collected in 1741 and published by his son, Joseph Rose, under the general title so beloved in those days, "Poems on Several Occasions."³ George Webb was a versifier of somewhat greater pretensions. He was a runaway Oxford scholar who managed to steal his way over to Philadelphia.⁴ His most celebrated poem was

¹ *Ibid.* p. 40.

² Both of these translations and several others may be obtained in the Pennsylvania Historical Society Memoirs. Vols. IX and X.

³ The book is reprinted in full in *Ibid.* Vol. IX.

⁴ "Life of Franklin," by John Bigelow. N. Y. 1871. Vol. I. p. 432 ff.

published in 1736, and was entitled "Bachelor's Hall," in praise of a local hostelry of the same name.

*Say, goodness, tell me, — for to thee is known
That is, what was, and what shall e'er be done,
Why stands this dome erected on the plain?
For pleasure was it built, or else for gain?
For midnight revels was it ever thought?
Or else for nobler purposes designed?
To cheer and cultivate the mind,
With mutual love each glowing breast inspire,
Or cherish friendship's now degenerate fire?*

. . .

*Tired with the business of the noisy town,
The weary bachelors their cares disown;
For this loved seat they all at once prepare,
And long to breathe the sweets of country-air.*

. . .

*'Tis not a revel or lascivious night
That to this hall the bachelors invite;
Much less shall impious doctrines here be taught,
Blush, ye accusers at the very thought!
For other, oh, for other ends designed,
To mend the heart and cultivate the mind. . . .*

Two other poets of the time deserve mention, if only for their contemporary popularity: Joseph Breintnal and Joseph Shippen. The second was the author of one of the better known love lyrics of that era, "The Glooms of Ligonier," published in 1759.¹

In Maryland the only writer worthy of extended notice was Ebenezer Cook. Nothing is known about his life, save from his only poem. It was published in London in 1708 as a pamphlet of twenty-one pages, under the title, "The Sot-Weed Factor: Or, a Voyage to Maryland. A Satyr. In which is describ'd, The Laws, Government, Courts and Constitutions of the Country; and also the Buildings, Feasts, Frolicks, Entertainments and Drunken Humours of the Inhabitants of that Part of *America*. In Burlesque Verse. By Eben. Cook, Gent." Twenty-one years later there was published in Annapolis a political

¹ "The Poets and Poetry of America," by Rufus Wilmot Griswold. p. 24.

satire under the title, "Sotweed Redivivus: or the Planters Looking-Glass in Burlesque Verse. Calculated for the Meridian of Maryland. By E. C. Ghent." In form this is very much like the former poem, but whether the first Cook was also the author of it is not known. Both are bad. But bad as "The Sot-Weed Factor" is, it is much more readable than most of the stuff produced at the time in New England, New York and New Jersey. For example:

*I then began to think with Care,
How I might sell my British Ware,
That with my Freight I might comply,
Did on my Charter party lie:
To this intent, with Guide before,
I tript it to the Eastern Shoar;
While riding near a Sandy Bay,
I met a Quaker, Yea and Nay;
A Pious Conscientious Rogue,
Who neither Swore nor kept his Word,
But cheated in the Fear of God;
And when his debts he would not pay,
By light within he ran away.
With this sly Zealot soon I struck
A Bargain for my English Truck,*

. . .

*The Contract thus betwixt us made,
Not well acquainted with the Trade,
My Goods I trusted to the Cheat,
Whose Crop was then abroad the Fleet;
And going to receive my own,
I found the Bird was newly flown:
Cursing this execrable Slave,
This damn'd pretended Godly Knave;
On due Revenge and Justice bent,
I instantly to Counsel went,
Unto an ambodexter Quack,
Who learnedly had got the knack
Of giving Glisters, making Pills,
Of filling Bonds, and forging Wills;*

*And with a stock of Impudence,
 Supply'd his want of Wit and Sense;
 With Looks demure, amazing People,
 No wiser than a Daw in Steeple;
 My Anger flushing in my Face,
 I stated the preceding Case:
 And of my Money was so lavish,
 That he'd have poyson'd half the Parish,
 And Hang'd his Father on a Tree,
 For such another tempting Fee;
 Smiling, said he, the Cause is clear,
 I'll manage him you need not fear;*

. . .

*May Canniballs transported o'er the Sea
 Prey on these Slaves, as they have done on me;
 May never Merchant's, trading Sails explore
 This Cruel, this Inhospitable Shoar;
 But left abandon'd by the World to starve,
 May they sustain the Fate they well deserve:
 May they turn Savage, or as Indians Wild,
 From Trade, Converse, and Happiness exil'd;
 Recreant to Heaven, may they adore the Sun,
 And into Pagan Superstitions run
 For Vengeance ripe ——
 May Wrath Divine then lay those Regions wast
 Where no Man's Faithful, nor a Woman Chast.¹*

2. ROBERT BEVERLY

It was in Virginia that the only literature of any merit was produced in the first fifty years of the Eighteenth Century. On the whole, in fact, it was much better than that of the hundred years preceding. The most celebrated of the literati of the period was Robert Beverly. He was born in the Colony in 1675 and died there in 1716. For a time he was clerk of the colonial council, and thus had access to all the official records, and was enabled to have published in London in

¹ From the edition by Bernard C. Steiner, published by the Maryland Historical Society in 1900. pp. 34-39.

1705 a "History of the Present State of Virginia," in four books. It attracted immediate attention not only in England and over here, but also on the Continent, so that less than two years after its first appearance it was translated into French and Dutch.

Beverly was a clear thinker and an able writer. His book tells almost everything about early Virginia that modern historians want to know. Of the custom of smoking tobacco he says:

The James Town Weed (which resembles the thorny apple of Peru, and I take to be the plant so called) is supposed to be one of the greatest coolers in the world. This being an early plant, was gathered very young for a boiled salad, by some of the soldiers sent thither to quell the Rebellion of Bacon; and some of them eat plentifully of it, and the effect of which was a very pleasant comedy; for they turned natural fools upon it for several days. One would blow up a feather in the air; another would dart straws at it with much fury; and another, stark naked, was sitting up in a corner, like a monkey, grinning and making mows at them; a fourth would fondly kiss and paw his companions and sneer in their faces with a countenance more antic than any in a Dutch froll. In this frantic condition they were confined lest they should in their folly destroy themselves; though it was observed that all their actions were full of innocent and good nature. . . . A thousand such tricks they played and after eleven days, returned to themselves again, not remembering anything that had passed.¹

Beverly was not in the least deluded by the pretensions of the founders of the Virginia Colony:

I can easily imagine with Sir Josiah Child, that this as well as all the rest of the plantations, was for the most part at first peopled by persons of low circumstances, and by such as were willing to seek their fortunes in a foreign country. Nor was it hardly possible it should be other wise; for 'tis not likely that any man of a plentiful estate should voluntarily abandon a happy certainty, to roam after imaginary advantages, in a new world. Besides which uncertainty, he must have proposed to himself to encounter the infinite difficulties and dangers that attend a new settlement.

¹ *Op. cit.* Edition of 1722. Book II. pp. 20-21.

These discouragements were sufficient to terrify any man that could live easy in England, from going to provoke his fortune in a strange land.

Those that went over to that country first, were chiefly single men, who had not the incumbrance of wives and children in England; and if they had they did not expose them to the fatigue and hazard of so long a voyage, until they saw how it should fare with themselves. From hence it came to pass, that when they were settled there in a comfortable way of subsisting a family, they grew sensible of the misfortune of wanting wives, and such as had left wives in England sent for them; but the single men were put to their shifts. They excepted against the Indian women, on account of their being pagans, as well as their complexions, and for fear they should conspire with those of their own nation, to destroy their husbands. Under this difficulty they had no hopes, but that the plenty in which they lived, might invite modest women, of small fortunes, to go over thither from England. However they would not receive any, but such as could carry sufficient certificate of their modesty and good behavior. Those, if they were but moderately qualified in other respects, might depend upon marrying very well in those days, without any fortune. Nay, the first planters were so far from expecting money with a woman, that 'twas a common thing for them to buy a deserving wife that carried good testimonials of her character, at the price of 100 pounds, and made themselves believe they had a bargain.

But this way of peopling the Colony was only at first; for after the advantages of the climate, and the fruitfulness of the soil were well known, and all the dangers incident to infant settlement were over, people of better condition retired thither with their families, either to increase the estates they had before, or else to avoid being persecuted for their principles of religion, or government.¹

3. WILLIAM BYRD

William Byrd wrote almost as well as Beverly. He was born in Virginia in 1674, and died there in 1744. He traveled extensively in

¹ *Op. cit.* Book IV. Par. II. Beginning of Chapter XV.

Europe, and represented the Colony in England on several important missions. For a time he was president of the King's Council. He was well educated, and possessed the largest library in the Colony — 3438 volumes. He was an explorer of distinction. He also took an interest in scientific affairs, and was a Fellow of the Royal Society. Most of his papers, known as the Westover Manuscripts, named after the place of his birth, have been collected and printed in three different editions: 1841, 1866, and 1901. The last was edited by the late John Spencer Bassett. They are all historical in substance. Perhaps the most valuable of them are "The History of the Dividing Line," dealing with the controversy over the precise border between Virginia and North Carolina; "A Journey to the Land of Eden"; "A Progress to the Mines"; and "An Essay on Balk Tobacco."

The following is from "The History of the Dividing Line," and is a good example of Byrd's style:

The Pines in this Part of the country are of a different Species from those that grow in Virginia: their Bearded Leaves are much longer and their Cones much larger. Each sell contains the Seed of the Size and Figure of a black-ey'd Pea, which, Shedding in November, is very good Mast for Hogs, and fattens them in a short time. . . .

Surely there is no place in the World where the Inhabitants live with less Labour then in N Carolina. It approaches nearer to the Description of Lubberland than any other, by the great felicity of the Climate, the easiness of raising Provisions, and the Slothfulness of the People.

Indian Corn is of so great increase, that a little Pains will Subsist a very large Family with Bread, and then they may have meat without any Pains at all, by the Help of the Low Grounds, and the great Variety of Mast that grows on the High-land. The Men, for their Parts, just like the Indians, impose all the Work upon the poor Women. They make their Wives rise out of their Beds early in the Morning, at the same time that they Lye and Snore, till the Sun has run one third of its course, and disperst all the unwholesome Damps. Then, after Stretching and Yawning for half an Hour, they light their Pipes, and, under the Protection of a cloud of Smoak, venture out into the open Air; tho', if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return Shivering into the Chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand

leaning with both their arms upon the corn-field fence, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a Small Heat at the Hough: but generally find reasons to put it off till another time.

Thus they loiter away their Lives, like Solomon's Sluggard, with their Arms across, and at the Winding up of the Year Scarcely have Bread to Eat.

To speak the Truth, tis a thorough Aversion to Labor that makes People file off to N. Carolina, where Plenty and a Warm Sun confirm them in their Disposition to Laziness for their whole Lives.¹

This amusing bit of dental science is from "A Journey to the Land of Eden":

I had an impertinent Tooth in my upper Jaw, that had been loose for some time, and made me chew with great Caution. Particularly I cou'd not grind a Biscuit but with much deliberation and presence of mind. Tooth-Drawers we had none amongst us, nor any of the Instruments they make use of. However, Invention supply'd this want very happily, and I contriv'd to get rid of this troublesome Companion by cutting a Caper. I caused a Twine to be fasten'd round the Root of my Tooth, about a Fathom in Length, and then ty'd the other end to the Snag of a Log that lay upon the Ground, in such a Manner that I could just stand upright. Having adjusted my String in this manner, I bent my Knees enough to enable me to spring vigorously off the Ground, as perpendicularly as I cou'd. The force of the Leap drew out the Tooth with so much ease that I felt nothing of it, nor should have believ'd it was come away, unless I had seen it dangling at the End of the String. an Under tooth may be fecht out by standing off the Ground and fastning your String at due distance above you. And having so fixt your Gear, jump off your Standing, and weight of your Body, added to the force of the Spring, will pize out your Tooth with less pain than any Operator upon Earth cou'd draw it. This new way of Tooth-drawing, being so silently and deliberately perform'd, both surprised and delighted all that were present, who could not guess what I was go-

¹ Bassett edition. pp. 83-84.

ing about. I immediately found the benefit of getting rid of this troublesome Companion, by eating my Supper with more comfort than I had done during the whole Expedition.¹

There were two other historians of Virginia who deserve mention: Hugh Jones, author of "The Present State of Virginia," published in London in 1724; and William Stith, author of "The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia," published at Williamsburg in 1747. The latter carries the narrative down to only 1624. The writing in both is rather confused.

The literature of the other Southern Colonies, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, may be disposed of in a word. There was none. John Lawson wrote a tremendous "History of North Carolina"; Alexander Garden wrote one of South Carolina; and Patrick Tailfer did "A True and Historical Narrative of the Colony of Georgia." The last contains a pointed attack on General James Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia. It has some documentary value, but one needs a lot of patience to go through it.²

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 167-168.

² Tailfer was assisted in the writing of his book by Hugh Anderson and David Douglass.

CHAPTER XIX

*The Theatre
in Early America*

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*The Theatre in Early America*¹

I. GENERAL REVIEW

THE EARLY AMERICAN THEATRE WAS REALLY NOT SO BAD AS some think. The colonists were not altogether without drama, and the little that they did manage to have was of rather good quality. For obvious reasons, it was the Middle and Southern Colonies where the theatre flourished best; in New England it was quite dormant, though not completely dead. Anti-theatre laws were on the statute books of all the Colonies, except Maryland and Virginia, but the public apparently paid little attention to them. At the beginning there was a general antipathy to actors and acting, because of their rather low moral reputation throughout the English-speaking world at the time. The notion that this antipathy existed in New England alone is wrong. It was almost as widespread in Episcopalian Virginia and Catholic Maryland. Puritanism, therefore, cannot wholly explain the opposition to the drama in early America. There were probably deeper reasons. Says Professor Quinn: "The Puritan and Quaker peoples were accustomed to abstract thinking, and the symbol was to them repugnant if not unnecessary. They associated it with monarchical forms in politics as well as religion, and they had no use for it. To the race that discoursed earnestly about the existence of witchcraft in the soul of men, and the race that felt the direct influence of the Spirit in

¹ For the information in this section I am indebted to the following books: "History of the American Theatre," by William Dunlap. 2 vols. London. 1833. Especially the first three chapters thereof; "A History of the American Theatre," by Arthur Hornblow. N. Y. 1919. Vol. I., especially the first six chapters in it; "A History of the American Theatre, From the Beginning to the Civil War," by Arthur Hobson Quinn. N. Y. 1923; and "Literary Culture in Early New England: 1620-1730," by Thomas Goddard Wright. The Yale University Press, 1920. Of the four, the Dunlap book is the least important since it has been proven to be full of errors of fact. Nevertheless, it has interest because of its intimate personal touches. The Hornblow, Quinn and Wright books, especially the first two, are good.

their early lives, the mimic representations of the stage may have seemed trivial."¹

Whatever the cause, the bar against acting continued in most of the Colonies until a late date. In 1750 the General Court of Massachusetts passed an act prohibiting stage plays and theatrical entertainments of all kinds. Harvard College, which was modeled upon Oxford and Cambridge, and at the time was quite as good as either, did not follow them in including in its curriculum play writing.² On May 31, 1759, the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania passed a resolution forbidding the showing of plays under penalty of £500 fine. In 1761, Rhode Island did likewise. A year later the House of Representatives of New Hampshire refused a troupe of actors admission to Portsmouth on the ground that plays had "a peculiar influence on the minds of young people and greatly endanger their morals by giving them a taste for intriguing, amusement and pleasure."³ Even so late as 1824 President Dwight of Yale, in his "Essays on the Stage," declared that "to indulge a taste for playgoing means nothing more or less than the loss of that most valuable treasure, the immortal soul."⁴

But the people, even the Bostonians, despite all these taboos, continued to be interested in plays. In 1750 a performance of Thomas Otway's tragedy, "The Orphan," was given in a coffee house in State street, Boston, by local amateurs, assisted by two professional players from England. "The affair was such a novelty and the curiosity of the Boston public to see the play so keen, that the doors of the coffee house were besieged and an incipient riot took place. The disturbance caused such a scandal that the authorities were compelled to take notice, and the General Court at once enacted a law, not only forbidding acting within the Commonwealth, but even rendering the spectators liable to fine."⁵

The acting in early America was undertaken by English professionals, by amateurs or by college students. The first play written by an American to be acted in this country was called "Gustavus Vasa," and was staged in 1690 by Harvard students behind locked doors. The first theatrical performance on the continent was given in French in 1606 at Port Royal in Acadia. The first record of a play in English describes the performance of "Ye Bare and Ye Cubb," by Cornelius

¹ Quinn. p. 2.

² Wright. p. 20.

³ Quoted by Hornblow. p. 24.

⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 24.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 33-34.

Walkinson, Philip Howard and William Darby, three citizens of Accomac county, Va. They were reported to the court, which inspected the play, found the players "not guilty of fault," and required the plaintiff to pay the costs. In 1702 there is a mention of a "pastoral colloquy" which was recited by the students of William and Mary College before the Governor.¹

Williamsburg, Va., had a regular playhouse from the beginning. The *Virginia Gazette* for September 10, 1736, says: "This evening will be performed at the Theatre by the Young Gentlemen of the College, the Tragedy of 'Cato,' and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday next will be acted the following Comedies by the young Gentlemen and Ladies of this Country — 'The Busybody' and 'The Recruiting Officer' and 'The Beaux Stratagem.'"² This is the earliest known newspaper record of a play in this country.

On February 18, 1735, in Charleston, S. C., was produced the first opera to be advertised by title, "Flora or Hob in the Well." The first theatrical company on a large scale was started in Philadelphia in 1749. It traveled to New York City, to Williamsburg, Va., and to Annapolis. In New York it produced twenty-four plays. Among them were "Richard III," Congreve's "Love for Love," Dryden's "Spanish Friar," Addison's "Cato," Gay's "Beggar's Opera," Lillo's "George Barnwell," Otway's "Orphan," and four of Farquhar's dramas — a record that is surely not one to be ashamed of.

The real theatrical history of America, however, began with the coming of Lewis Hallam and his company in 1752. He opened at Williamsburg in "The Merchant of Venice" on September 15, 1752. He remained in Virginia for eleven months and then went to New York, where he built a theatre on the east side of Nassau street, between Madison lane and John street. He also traveled to Philadelphia. Among the plays he produced in both cities were "King Lear," "The Merchant of Venice," "King Richard III," "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "Othello," Rowe's "Fair Penitent," "Jane Shore," and "Tamerlane"; Henry Jones' "Earl of Essex," Ambrose Phillips' "The Distressed Mother," Addison's "The Drummer," Congreve's "Love for Love," Cibber's "The Careless Husband," Hoadley's "The Conscious Lovers," and Gay's "Beggar's Opera." He also produced twelve farces, including one each by Garrick, Fielding and Cibber.

¹ Quinn. p. 5.

² Quoted in *Ibid.* p. 7.

In 1761 the company went to Boston, Providence and Newport and played in each of these cities. There was, of course, official opposition, but the people went to see the plays nevertheless. In 1766, Douglass, who was now head of the company, built the first permanent theatre in America in Philadelphia, and called it the Southwack Theatre. It was here that the one and only performance of Thomas Godfrey's "The Prince of Parthia," "the only play of American origin actually performed on an American stage before the Revolution,"¹ was given.

2. "THE PRINCE OF PARTHIA"

Thomas Godfrey was born in Philadelphia in 1736. He was the son of a philosophical glazier of the same name, mentioned in Franklin's "Autobiography" at length and with much commendation. He died in North Carolina in 1763, when not quite twenty-seven years old. Beside his one play, he also wrote numerous poems. All of his works were published by his friend Nathaniel Evans in 1765, under the title, "Juvenile Poems on Various Subjects, with the Prince of Parthia."

Godfrey's poetry may be dismissed rapidly. It was a very poor imitation of Pope and Dryden, as witness the following:

THE WISH

*I only ask a moderate fate,
And, though not in obscurity,
I would not, yet, be placed too high;
Between the two extremes I'd be,
Not meanly low, nor yet too great,
From both contempt and envy free.*

*If no glittering wealth I have,
Content of bounteous haven I crave,
For that is more
Than all the Indian's shining store,
To be unto the dust a slave.
With heart my little I will use,
Nor let pain my life devour,
Or for a griping heir refuse
Myself one pleasant hour.*

¹ Quinn. p. 30.

*No stately edifice to rear;
My wish would bound a small retreat,
In temperate air, and furnished neat:
No ornaments would I prepare,
No costly labors of the loom
Should e'er adorn my humble room;
To gild my roof I naught require
But the stern Winter's friendly fire.*

*Free from tumultuous cares and noise,
If gracious Heaven my wish would give,
While sweet content augments my joys,
Thus my remaining hours I'd live.
By arts ignoble never rise,
The miser's ill-got wealth despise;
But blest my leisure hours I'd spend,
The Muse enjoying, and my friend.¹*

The play is little better. Were it not for its importance as the first native play produced on an American stage, it would deserve oblivion. It is a romantic tragedy laid in Parthia about the beginning of the Christian era. It is full of blood and thunder. It tells a story of ambition, of unrequited love and revenge. There is nothing distinctive in either idea or expression. For example:

The Curtain rises, slowly, to soft music, and discovers EVANTHE sleeping on a sofa; after the music ceases, VARDANES enters.

VARDANES: *Now shining Empire standing at the goal,
Beck'ns me forward to increase my speed;
But, yet, ARSACES lives, bane to my hopes,
LYSIAS I'll urge to ease me of his life,
Then give the villain up to punishment.
The shew of justice gains the changeling croud.
Besides, I ne'er will harbour in my bosom
Such serpents, ever ready with their stings —
But now one hour for love and fair EVANTHE
Hence with ambition's cares — see, e're reclin'd,
In slumbers all her sorrows are dismiss'd,*

¹ Evans edition. pp. 12-14.

*Sleep seems to heighten ev'ry beauteous feature,
 And adds peculiar softness to each grace.
 She weeps — in dreams some lively sorrow pains her —
 I'll take one kiss — oh! what a balmy sweetness!
 Give me another — and another still —
 For ever thus I'll dwell upon her lips.
 Be still my heart, and calm unruly transports. —
 Wake her with music from this mimic death. (Music sounds.)*

SONG

*Tell me, Phillis, tell me why,
 You appear so wondrous coy,
 When that glow, and sparking eye,
 Speak you want to taste the joy?
 Prithee give this fooling o'er,
 Nor torment your lover more.*

*While youth is warm within our veins,
 And nature tempts us to be gay,
 Give to pleasure loose the reins,
 Love and youth fly swift away.
 Youth in pleasure should be spent,
 Age will come, we'll then repent.*

EVANTHE: (waking) : *I come ye lovely shades — Hah! Am I here?*

*Still in the tyrant's palace? Ye bright pow'rs!
 Are all my blessings then but vis'onary?
 Methought I was arriv'd on that blest shore
 Where happy souls for ever dwell, crown'd with
 Immortal bliss; Arsaces led me through
 The flow'ry groves, while all around me gleam'd
 Thousand and thousand shades, who welcom'd me
 With pleasing songs of joy — VARDANES, ha! —*

VARDANES: *Why beams the angry lightning of thine eye
 Against thy sighing slave? Is love a crime?
 Oh! if to dote, with such excess of passion
 As rises e'en to mad extravagance
 Is criminal, I then am so, indeed.*

EVANTHE: *Away! vile man! —*

VARDANES: *If to pursue thee e'er
With all the humblest offices of love,
If ne'er to know one single thought that does
Not bear thy bright idea, merits scorn —*

EVANTHE: *Hence from my sight — nor let me, thus, pollute
Mine eyes, with looking on a wretch like thee,
Thou cause of all my ills; I sicken at
Thy loathsome presence —*

VARDANES: *'Tis not always thus,
Nor dost thou ever meet the sounds of love
With rage and fierce disdain: Arsaces, soon,
Could smooth thy brow, and melt thy icy breast.*

EVANTHE: *Ha! does it gall thee? Yes, he could, he could;
Oh! when he speaks, such sweetness dwells upon
His accents, all my soul dissolves to love,
And warm desires; such truth and beauty join'd!
His looks are soft and kind, such gentleness
Such virtue swells his bosom! in his eye
Sits majesty, commanding ev'ry heart.
Strait as the pine, the pride of all the grove,
More blooming than the spring, and sweeter far,
Than asphodels or roses infant sweets.
Oh! I could dwell forever on his praise,
Yet think eternity was scarce enough
To tell the mighty theme; here in my breast
His image dwells, but one dear thought of him,
When fancy paints his Person to my eye,
As he was wont in tenderness dissolv'd,
Sighing his vows, or kneeling at my feet,
Wipes off all mem'ry of wretchedness.¹*

¹ Evans edition. pp. 120–124.

CHAPTER XX

*Scholarship and
Scientific Writing*

CHAPTER XX

*Scholarship and Scientific Writing*¹

THERE WERE MANY EDUCATED AND MORE OR LESS SCHOLARLY men in early America, especially in New England. The primacy of the latter was due to the large number of ministers in it, all of whom were graduates of, or former students in, Oxford or Cambridge.² Things were different in the other Colonies. In all Virginia, for example, "in its first decades there were only four clergymen, only one of whom was liberally educated."³ The New England clergymen did much to foster the love of learning. Whether the type of learning they were interested in was good or bad is beside the point at the moment. The fact remains that six years after the settlement of Boston they founded Harvard College, and in a short time put it on almost the same plane with Oxford and Cambridge. True enough, it was then little more than what would now be called a high-school, but Oxford and Cambridge were not much better.⁴

Its courses of instruction were the same as those in the English universities: physics, logic, ethics, politics, Greek, the Old and New Testaments, rhetoric, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac and elementary mathematics. And each of them was taught in as thorough a manner as abroad. For example, the following departments of Greek were given: etymology, syntax, prosodia, imitation, dialectics, grammar, poetry, nonnus, duport, style, composition, epitome.⁵

¹ For my information here I rely mainly on these books: "A History of Higher Education in America," by Charles F. Thwing. N. Y. 1906; "Great American Universities," by Edwin E. Slosson, N. Y. 1910; "Literary Culture in Early New England," by Thomas Goddard Wright. The Yale University Press, 1920; "Notes on Early American Literature," by James F. Hunnewell. Reprinted from the Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society. April, 1896; "Collectors: An Address Read to the Club of Odd Volumes at its annual meeting, Boston, December 18, 1907." Published in 1908, also by James F. Hunnewell; and "Intercolonial Relations on the Eve of the Revolution," by Michael Krause. The Columbia University Press. 1928.

² Thwing. p. 3.

³ *Ibid.* p. 4.

⁴ Thwing. p. 25; Slosson. p. 10; Wright. p. 20; Krause. p. 34.

⁵ Wright. p. 20.

Yale was founded in 1702 by Harvard men of the more orthodox variety, and thus its courses of study were generally the same. Princeton was founded forty-eight years later, and by even more devout Calvinists, yet the curriculum was much like Harvard's. William and Mary was established in 1693, and because of the training of its founder, the Rev. James Blair, it showed the influences of the Scottish universities rather than of the English. More Latin was taught in it than at Harvard, and also more pure philosophy.¹ The main purpose of all these universities, like that of their British counterparts, was the training of ministers. In the first sixty or seventy years of the Seventeenth Century most of the graduates went to England in search of better opportunities. But later they found it as profitable to remain at home, and thus helped to spread learning more widely on these shores.²

As for the reading of books, the early Colonies were in a sorry state. "The first two generations in our country were practically without books and literature, and libraries were few and small, and even some of these were burned or lost at an early date."³ For the remainder of the pre-Revolutionary era things continued just as bad.⁴ Few books were actually published here, and most of them were theological. The Cambridge press, for example, the largest in the country at the time, printed only 157 books from 1636 to 1670. They were divided thus:

Almanacs	26
Books in Indian language	19
Religious books (prose)	58
Religious books (verse)	5
Lists of Harvard theses	12
Laws and official publications	22
School books	3
Poetry	4
History, biography, etc.	8 ⁵

In the early days of the Republic "scarcely anyone seems to have cared for what is called literature."⁶ An inventory of the bookshop of

¹ Thwing. p. 56.

² Wright. p. 150.

³ Hunnewell. "Collectors . . ." pp. 18-19.

⁴ Wright. pp. 104, 161.

⁵ Wright. pp. 82-83.

⁶ Hunnewell. "Notes on Early American Literature." p. 10.

Michael Perry of Boston, made in 1700, showed the following. There were 2504 volumes in all. Of these, 1459 were catechisms, and 26 were calendars. There were 35 Bibles, 4 in Latin, 1 in Hebrew, and the remainder in English; 52 Psalters; 310 Psalm books; and 6 Common Prayer books. The rest were miscellaneous. Thus about 75% of the whole collection dealt with religious subjects. Only 2% dealt with the classics, and there was nothing at all of English literature, other than "3 Pilgrims Progress with cuts."¹

What was true of Perry's stock, was equally true of all other collections, private, commercial or public. In 1723 there was printed the first catalogue of an American public library, that of Harvard. It was called "*Catalogus Librorum Bibliothecae Collegii Harvardini Quod est Cantabrigiae in Nova Anglia. Boston Nov-Anglorum: Typis. B. Green Academiae Typographi.*" Most of the books listed, 86% to be precise, were of a religious nature. There was an Eliot's Indian Bible, but no Morton's "New England Memorial" nor anything by Anne Bradstreet. There were twenty-six works by Increase Mather, and nine by Cotton Mather, not including his "Magnalia," but Milton was represented only by his "Defensio pro populo Anglicano." There was only one volume of Shakespeare.² The private library of "the late Reverend and Learned Mr. Samuel Lee," inventoried in 1693, showed about the same proportion. Few American authors were represented in it, and there was nothing whatever in it of Milton, of Shakespeare, or of any other first-rate English author.

The New Englanders, for reasons already made obvious, read rather more than any of the other colonists, but it would be wrong to say that the latter were wholly illiterate. There were few private libraries among them, but those few were, on the whole, larger and of much better grade than those of the Puritans. John Winthrop, who died in 1678, left a library of 269 books, and John Eliot, said to have had the largest library in New England between 1713 and 1745, left but 243. But Dr. Charles Brown, of Virginia, who died in 1738, left 670 books, and William Byrd, who died six years later, left 4000.³ The inventory made of Robert Beverly's 266 books in 1734 gives a good idea of a gentleman's library in Virginia at that time. Thirty-nine items in it dealt with religion; 41 with literature, including Bacon's "Essays," Milton's "Paradise Lost," More's "Utopia," Pope's "Poems," and Gay's "Beggars Opera"; 63 dealt with the classics, 24 with history, 9 with law, 9 with grammar, and 6 with

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 11-12.

² *Ibid.* p. 13.

³ Thwing. p. 55.

geography. There were 12 dictionaries, 4 Bibles, including the Greek and Latin Testaments, 15 books on science and mathematics, one on dancing and another on music.¹

In the first one hundred years of the American press 214 biographies or memorial discourses were printed. John Norton's "Life of the Reverend John Cotton," Boston 1675, was the first American biography. Sermons attending the execution of criminals were very plentiful. The first was Increase Mather's "Wicked Man's Portion: a Lecture, January 18, 1674." It was printed in 1675. In the case of such sermons, "terrors were added to death by the length and the nature of these compositions."² After the witchcraft craze, there was much interest in financial affairs. In 1691 there appeared in Boston a duodecimo of 24 pages on "Considerations of Bills Credit." In 1714 six more financial books were published, all of them in Boston.

The colonial annals were not much as history, but they were not altogether discreditable. The Winthrop and Bradford journals, after all, whatever may be said about them as literature, were written with a sound historical motive. Thomas Hutchinson's "History of New England" is even more valuable and probably sounder in its facts than either. Thomas Prince's "Chronological History of New England, in the form of Annals," the first attempt at bibliography in America, though it went only to August 5, 1633, was well done. It is indispensable to the student of early America. Almost the same may be said of John Callender's "A Centennial Discourse" on Rhode Island, of William Douglass' "Summary, Historical and Political . . . of the British Settlements in North America," and of William Stith's "The History of the First Discovery and Settlement of Virginia."

Strictly scientific inquiry was not wholly dead. The intellectuals of the time wrote a great deal of theological nonsense about earthquakes, rainbows, snowstorms, comets and meteors, but when they forgot these "special providences" they wrote soundly and well on physics, astronomy, botany, medicine, geography and geology. Cotton Mather's great work in behalf of inoculation against the smallpox is well known.³ John Bartram's botanical experiments and zoölogical observations on the Schuylkill were respected in Europe, and so were

¹ Hunnewell. "Notes on Early American Literature." p. 15.

² *Ibid.* p. 6.

³ Professor George Lyman Kittredge discusses these writings at length in "Some Lost Papers of Cotton Mather." *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceed.* Vol. 45. 1911-1912. February, 1912. pp. 419-479.

the similar investigations by John Banister of Virginia. The latter was an honored correspondent of the English naturalist, John Ray. Among his numerous scientific writings may be found "The Insects of Virginia," "Curiosities of Virginia," and "The Pistolochia, or Serpentaria Virginiana." John Clayton, also of Virginia, corresponded with Linnæus and Gronovius, and contributed many papers to the English "Philosophical Transactions." David Rittenhouse, of Philadelphia, a maker of clocks and scientific instruments, a physicist and a physician, was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and succeeded Franklin as president of the American Philosophical Society.

The celebrated Count Rumford, born in Boston, began his regular study of science by attending the lectures of Professor John Winthrop of Harvard. The latter was on several occasions invited to come back to England, where he was considered a great philosopher and accomplished scientist. His "correspondence with scientific and literary men in England and on the Continent was extensive."¹ Among the English scientists he corresponded with was no less a person than Robert Boyle. Winthrop was in the habit of discussing scientific matters with all the leading divines of his time, and there is a record of Thomas Shepard thanking him for letting him see a copy of the Transactions of the Royal Society.² John Winthrop's son, of the same name, was also interested in science. Beside, he dabbled in literature, though he knew little about it, and was on intimate terms with Milton. Milton, by the way, had many friends among the New Englanders, and so did Marvel. Roger Williams and John Oxenbridge corresponded with them for years.

¹ Wright. p. 71.

² *Ibid.* p. 74.

CHAPTER XXI

Conclusion

CHAPTER XXI

Conclusion

THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY ERA WAS THE DREARIEST AND THE most sterile in the entire history of American literature. It did not produce one truly great piece of *belles lettres*, nor even a second-rate one, nor a third-rate one. The time was full of great men and even great thinkers. Roger Williams, John Eliot, John Wise and Jonathan Edwards would adorn any age and any country. Williams and Wise were political philosophers of the first order, and posterity has done their memories injustice by neglecting their work. But only on rare occasions were they able to put their ideas on paper in clear and effective English.

Whatever real culture and learning there was at the time was in New England, and it remained there till the Revolution. Throughout the greater part of this period, the Colonies were separate and distinct communities. There was extremely little intercourse of any kind among them. There is no record that Edwards was known even as a name in Virginia, and neither is there any record that the Puritans were familiar with the work and writings of Robert Beverly. It was only toward the middle of the Eighteenth Century that some sort of communion began between the Colonies. This was largely due to the rise of colleges, whither rich parents sent their sons, and to the rise of newspapers and learned societies. As for intercourse with the mother country, it went on throughout the one hundred and fifty years, but it was only the Northern Colonies who indulged in it to any great extent.

The Americans of the time were generally of a low social and intellectual order. The greater part of them were wastrels and ne'er-do-wells who ran away from England in search of an environment more agreeable to their general incompetence. Most of them were ignorant, and devoid of all interest in matters of the mind. This was especially true of the Southern Colonies. In New England the low cultural level of the populace was considerably offset by the learning of its theocracy. The Shepards and the Hookers and the Cottons and the

Mathers were all Oxford or Cambridge men, and if they did nothing else they instilled into their people a respect for the intellect. In this regard the Southern Colonies suffered by comparison. There were very few clergymen of any education among them, and as a result their people continued in ignorance. To be sure, there was a handful of Beverlys and Byrds and Blairs, but even if there had been hundreds of them, the situation would probably have remained the same. It is seldom in history that a cultured lay minority is able to influence appreciably a whole community. Somehow the masses distrust the civilized layman. At best they will leave him and his interests alone. But their ministers they will heed, and if the ministers happen to be learned men their influence on the populace will be tremendous. So it was in New England. A community of failures and ignoramuses discussing delicate, even if preposterous, points of Holy Writ has more promise in it than a similar community of failures and ignoramuses whiling away their days in sheer loafing or in sordid attempts at chivalry — or even in going to see Shakespearean plays.

There are few tragedies in American history comparable to those of the early New England theocrats. Every one of them possessed a resourceful and eager mind, and every one of them was imbued with a love of books. But their dominant devotion was to Puritanism, a stern philosophy of life and of some use, possibly, in a new environment such as America then was, but also a bitter enemy of free inquiry and of all beauty. It poisoned the intellects of such indubitably great men as the Mathers, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, and it ruined even the mighty mind of Jonathan Edwards. They studied the stars and the sun and the moon and the fauna and flora of their country, and did so with sufficient competence to be treated respectfully by Robert Boyle and Linnæus, but they really cared little for the accurate observation of natural phenomena: it was "special providences" they were mainly concerned with. Puritanism not only poisoned their minds; it also blighted their hearts. Not one love poem did they produce before the Revolution — a stretch of one hundred and fifty years. Anne Bradstreet once forgot herself sufficiently to sing the praises of her husband, but before she finished her poem, as we have seen, she confessed that she loved God more.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that the Puritan divines did have one good influence. They instilled into their people a love of books and hence of ideas. True enough, most of the books were of a wrong kind, and nearly all the ideas preposterous or futile. But they were books

and ideas just the same. This love of learning took root, and before another hundred years were over it blossomed into the New England Golden Age. It brought forth Hawthorne, Thoreau, Lowell and Emily Dickinson. The South brought forth nothing. In 1760 it was an intellectual Sahara, and all it could show a century thereafter was Sidney Lanier.

A Literary History of the American People

I N D E X

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A Literary History of the American People

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AMERICAN PEOPLE

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P R E F A C E

The present volume deals with the so-called formative period between 1750 and 1815. It was the great political era in American history, as the one before it was the great theological era. Like the latter it produced nothing memorable in the field of belles-lettres; that was to come immediately afterward, with "Thanatopsis," the first truly distinguished piece of imaginative writing done in America, as the herald of the new age.

As in the preceding volume I append no bibliography. The one in Volume I of "The Cambridge History of American Literature" is excellent; all the important things written since are mentioned in my footnotes or in the text.

CHARLES ANGOFF

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CHAPTER I

The
Revolutionary Period (1750-1783)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A Literary History of the American People

The Revolutionary Period (1750-1783)

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WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH Century American history began to take on a national character. The Thirteen Colonies, true enough, superficially remained separate and distinct, as before, but there was already working among them a certain feeling of unity, vague yet real. This feeling of unity was brought about by a common distrust of the motherland. The causes of this distrust were political, ecclesiastical, and social in character. The colonists who had been coming in during the century and a half before were, in the main, dissatisfied men, and readily amenable to radical ideas, both in government and in religion. Their prosperity up to the time of the Revolution was only of a modest sort, and this fact, of course, only served to intensify their heterodoxy.¹ The distance separating the mother country and America added fuel to the spirit of discontent. Until about 1755 there was no regular mail service, and orders from London were long in coming, and thus the Colonies tended to rely more and more on themselves. That the idea of democracy and other novelties thrived in such an atmosphere was only natural. Indeed, "not since the dawn of civilization had such possibilities for the trial of new ideas, and for the advancement of the democratic principle opened to the sons of men."²

The fact was that the Colonies enjoyed a great deal of self-government prior to the Revolution. Having found themselves successful

¹ Perhaps the best discussion of the political and social condition of the Colonies at the time of the Revolution is "The Causes of the War of Independence. Being the First Volume of a History of the Founding of the American Republic," by Claude H. Van Tyne. Boston. 1922. On the particular point herein referred to see especially p. 7 ff. A second good book on this general period is "Americans of 1776," by James Schouler. N. Y. 1909. Finally, there is Professor Vernon Louis Parrington's, "Main Currents in American Thought," N. Y. 1927. Vol. I. p. 186 ff.

² Van Tyne. p. 17.

at it, they were reluctant to let go when the home government, through its provincial Governors, tried to take it away from them in order to make them more profitable to the London entrepreneurs. "Whatever might have been the original condition of the English Colonies in America, or whatever from time to time the imperial purpose of the British government, the political fact had come to be, by 1760, that the Colonies were self-governing. They possessed assemblies which enjoyed political supremacy within their own boundaries. Through their own laws and committees the colonial legislatures controlled to a large extent the policy of the Colonies. Within its own little realm a colonial legislature was hardly less mighty than the British Parliament. . . . Parliament might pass laws to regulate her commerce, but there were smugglers to set the laws at naught, and as for the great majority of her domestic concerns, Parliament never heard of them."¹

The clergy did all they could to nourish the growing political discontent. The English Church, which tried to establish an episcopacy here with bishops exported for the purpose, met strong and violent opposition from the colonial ecclesiastics. The latter, remembering the harsh treatment their fathers had received at the hands of Archbishop Laud, would have nothing to do with any religious domination from London. In the fifty years preceding the Revolution, the abler and more popular ones among them had been fighting a hard battle with the old theocracy here at home, and having won, they were all the more resentful of theocratic moves from overseas. Some of them, such as John Wise and Jonathan Mayhew, had been clamoring not only for religious democracy, but also for political democracy, without which the first would be impossible. All of them were trained in the science of government, and they readily saw the relationship between an ecclesiastical theocracy and a political monarchy. It was therefore only natural that they should ally themselves with the Otises and Adamses and Patrick Henrys. "Preachers like Mayhew and Cooper seem to have known as much of the science of government as Otis and the Adamses. They boldly attacked the question of the nature of compacts and charters as they affected the relations of the Colonies to England. They discussed the origin, nature, and end of government, and the rights of man, and asserted that all laws were designed for the good of the governed."²

¹ Van Tyne. p. 89.

² *Ibid.* p. 356.

This growing spirit of religious and political liberalism was greatly nourished by the writings of the French Romantic and Rationalistic thinkers, especially Rousseau, Montesquieu, Condorcet, Voltaire and Raynal, who gradually superseded the vogue of Locke, Hume and Priestley. This influence made itself felt in the Declaration of Independence and in the entire course of American culture from the Revolution onward to the time of Walt Whitman.¹ A similar evolution was taking place in American religious life, and it became unusually strong at the turn of the Eighteenth Century. "Throughout the United States, a religious restlessness was making itself felt. The people as a whole were touched with a disaffection toward priests and churches. There was difficulty in the South in reorganizing the Church of England [which managed to make some foothold there after much strife only a little less bitter than what had occurred in New England.] . . . In Maryland the newspapers were agitating for the most complete tolerance. The Baptists, who were to make so much progress later on, were still in a preparatory phase. Their democratic spirit and manners destined them to become the most flourishing sect during these troubled years. The Lutheran Church was going through the most trying crisis that she had ever been subject to in the New World. The credo was becoming vague, especially among the pastors; and the members of the congregations were refusing to pay for the maintenance of the parishes, many of which disappeared. Even in New England, a region so pious and so faithful to traditions, the spirit of tolerance was spreading, together with deism."²

With these political and ecclesiastical differences it was inevitable that the Colonies should develop a social estrangement from the mother country. There were, of course, in addition, the usual causes of mutual social antipathy between a people living in a comparatively civilized land and a people trying to conquer a wilderness. "Every social and intellectual difference which diverse conditions created between England and America diminished the understanding and sympathy which alone would keep harmony in the Empire. The wealth and culture of old, dignified and conservative England contrasted sharply with the rude American frontier conditions, where the imitations of London fashions in Philadelphia or Boston merely aroused the mirth of English observers. . . . The visiting colonist in London,

¹ "The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America," by Bernard Faÿ. N. Y. 1927. Translated by Ramon Guthrie. p. 472 ff.

² *Ibid.* pp. 219-220.

on the other hand, was more apt to see the corruption than the refinements of metropolitan life."¹

At the time of the Revolution there were about 3,000,000 people in the Colonies. The five leading centers of population were Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Charleston and Baltimore. A good portion of the population was composed of indentured white servants and imported African slaves. "Beside the white temporary slaves of debt, British convicts were shipped to our Colonies in large numbers to work out their punishment as bond-servants for such as might choose to employ them. Nor were our thrifty colonial authorities indisposed to lighten their own local taxation and relieve their local jails by letting provincial criminals fulfill their penalties in servitude at private cost."²

The pursuits of the Colonies were mainly agricultural—tobacco raising, stock raising, and rice and indigo growing. The Southern cotton trade did not really begin till about 1812. The new textile machines were invented in England in 1760–1770, and it was about forty years later before they were developed to practical use and brought over here. There was a little farming done in the North, but because of the nature of the land it was limited to small areas. There was practically no mining whatever on this continent at the time. Coal was not sought after, since there were vast forests about. The barter system of exchange was still in use and continued for at least another quarter of a century, and in the South even into the Nineteenth Century. Tobacco was long used as a medium of exchange in Virginia. The learned professions were divinity, medicine, law, architecture, surveying and banking, in about this order of public esteem.

The advent of the Industrial Age and the successful termination of the Revolution, of course, changed the socio-political stratification of colonial society considerably. Prior to the Revolution there was gradually emerging on these shores an aristocracy of blood, of station, and of wealth. The year 1776 put an end to it—at least for a time—and cleared the way for democracy. The Tories were chased home or to Canada, and "for the first time the middle class was free to create a civilization after its own ideals. In rising to leadership it brought another spirit into every phase of life. Dignity and culture henceforth were to count for less and assertiveness for more. Ways became less leisurely, the social temper less urbane. . . . A franker evaluation

¹ Van Tyne, p. 314.

² "Americans of 1776," by James Schouler. N. Y. 1909. p. 17.

of success in terms of money began to obscure the older personal and family distinction.”¹

Socially and culturally the colonists were, to be sure, not so civilized as the contemporary Europeans, but neither were they, particularly in the social sphere, as barbaric as legend would have us believe. The prevailing temper of the time, especially in New England, was Puritan, but the few free spirits of the land managed to flourish, and to obtain the latest and best continental books. There was plenty of good liquor for all, and no social stigma was attached to the selling or drinking of it. One conservative historian laments that “excessive drinking was, in truth, America’s great social vice, until far down into the Nineteenth Century, when temperance crusades first began. . . . The sale of liquors was licensed in our several provinces, so as to produce a revenue; and one seldom saw a respected city merchant or a country grocer, who did not make liquors of one sort or another a very important part of his stock in trade, as well as an inducement for individual customers to purchase. Bakers and apothecaries retailed ardent spirits. Stern Samuel Adams at one time ran such an establishment next his Boston dwelling-house, though he did not succeed well in the business; and scores of such factories were maintained near the chief seats of commerce.”²

Dancing was by no means absent in the life of the Colonies, even in the most critical days of the Revolutionary period. “While the Continental Congress sat at Philadelphia . . . that city became the center of social gayety for all America, despite its sedate atmosphere; and thither flocked a motley and mutable society, which comprised not only statesmen and civilians from all the thirteen States or Colonies, but military officers, beside, of the Continental Army, and French compatriots on war and pleasure bent. During the Winter months of those years a subscription ball or assembly was given, with dances and partners arranged by billet and signature; whereby, as French beaux complained, men and women bound themselves as by pre-contract for an entire evening.”³ Winter balls were the regular thing at the Raleigh tavern in Williamsburg, and Jefferson, as a student at William and Mary’s, was a frequenter of them. By the time of the Revolution there were dancing schools in Philadelphia, Boston, New York and other large towns, and the agile dancing-master, usually a Frenchman,

¹ Parrington. Vol. I. pp. 192-193.

² Schouler. pp. 96-97.

³ *Ibid.* p. 105.

at intervals invaded the more quiet communities. These dancing-masters, incidentally, were held in high esteem by the populace, and many of them also taught French at the universities. At Harvard a Parisian dancing-master was the French instructor.¹

As for music, the colonists had little to boast of. They seemed to have little interest in it, and in the Middle and Northern Colonies they looked down upon it as something not quite seemly and even heretical. At the time Händel was conquering England, even psalmody in America, according to Jonathan Boucher, was "everywhere ordinary and mean."² "In New England the Puritan settlers had been hostile to music, and what they permitted must have 'conscience rather than elegance.' Lest it should prove an instrument of the Devil to charm godly minds from holy thoughts, the Puritan had been wary of music for its own sake."³ In New York and Charleston hymn singing was accepted from the first, but in New England it had to make its way slowly on account of ecclesiastical opposition. Nevertheless, the beginning of truly American music was probably the psalm singing of the Pilgrims. In 1740 Philadelphia had a Musical Association. Choir singing—that is, open and free choir singing—began in New England about 1750, and twenty years later William Billings, the second American composer, published "The New England Psalm Singer." There were concerts of serious music in New England forty years before the Revolution. From there the idea spread to Charleston, Philadelphia and New York, but in Charleston, at least, it seems to have been necessary to mingle tight-rope dancing, magic, and other thrills with the more sober musical entertainment. As is well known, John Adams, Patrick Henry and Jefferson played the fiddle. The more prosperous homes had harpsichords and spinets, and it became fashionable for the ladies to play them. The first organ was brought here by a German about 1750, and people came from far to hear it. But all this should not lead us to think that there was any considerable musical consciousness among the Americans of that time. The generality of the people were indifferent and even hostile to music. It

¹ On this point see Schouler, p. 106. Also Bernard Faÿ. pp. 209, 210, 211, 340, 341.

² Quoted in Van Tyne. p. 330.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 330–331. On this point Schouler, an older and more conservative historian, says, "Americans in a cultural or uncultural way were fond of music, and the rural singing school was a memorable delight. Young men and women made harmony together of bass, treble, alto and tenor in the rural choir loft Sundays, looking down upon the congregation below, who turned during the last hymn to face them." p. 109. But he presents no documentary evidence to substantiate this thesis.

was only the few more intelligent individuals who played any musical instruments or found enjoyment listening to others play them. In 1763 Franklin would go no further than to say that "some of our young Geniuses begin to lisp attempts at Painting, Poetry and Music."¹

Common school education in the Colonies was fairly good. By the time of the Revolution nearly all of them had compulsory public education in one form or another.² As for colleges, ten flourished at the time of the founding of the nation: Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, the Academy and College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), Princeton, King's College (now Columbia), Brown, Dartmouth, Washington and Lee, and Rutgers. Some of the leading figures of the Revolution were graduates of one or another of these institutions. Among the graduates of Harvard were Samuel and John Adams, John Hancock and Timothy Pickering; of Yale, Nathan Hale and William Livingston; of William and Mary, Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, George Whyte, Peyton Randolph and John Tyler the elder—John Marshall and Washington studied there for a time, but did not graduate; of Princeton, Madison and Freneau; and of King's, Jay and Hamilton. The Academy and College of Philadelphia did not produce any extraordinary individuals, but it had the honor of starting the first medical school in the country.

Most of the reading matter of the time came from England. The common people had little interest in *belles lettres*. The most popular books of 1772–1775 were "Jonathan Edwards' Sermons, Wither-spoon on the Gospels, Whitefields's Letters, 'Domestic Medicine or the Family Physician,' dissertations on the gout, essays on comets, treatises on the keeping of bees, Bishop Burnet's History, Pope's 'Essay on Man,' Priestley's 'Experimental Philosophy,' Dean Swift, and Clarendon's 'History of the English Rebellion.' The patron with plethoric purse invested, not in fiction or humor so much as in Duhamel's Husbandry, Bailey's or Johnson's Standard Dictionary, or the Dictionary of Arts and Sciences; he chose from among the various handy compends of the day in mathematics, grammar, the classics, and geography. . . . A book in great demand among the women was 'The Frugal Housewife and Complete Woman Cook.'"³

In theoretical politics, however, the Americans of the time did read a great deal. In 1775 Burke said, "I hear as many Blackstones are

¹ Franklin. Writings. Smyth Edition. Vol. IV. p. 194.

² See Schouler. pp. 198–200.

³ Schouler. pp. 122–123.

sold in America as in England.”¹ John Adams read and quoted Harrington, Hooker, Sidney, Milton, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Grotius and Pufendorf. Franklin had in his library books by Locke, Hoadley, Sidney, Milton and Montesquieu. Similarly with John Hancock, Josiah Quincy, Jonathan Mayhew and Samuel Adams. Alexander Hamilton, even in his youth, read Grotius, Hobbes, Hume, Locke, Montesquieu and Pufendorf. “The wide acquaintance with such literature was the one green oasis in the arid desert of American intellectual attainment. No sensible English statesman would speak disdainfully of colonial accomplishment in that branch of learning.”²

In spite of all this, opportunities for acquiring more than superficial learning were few. John Adams wrote in his diary, at the age of twenty, “I long to be a master of Greek and Latin. I long to prosecute the mathematical and philosophical sciences. I long to know a little ethics and moral philosophy. But I have no books, no time, no friends. I must therefore be contented to live and die an ignorant, obscure man.”³ And yet he was a Harvard A. B. at the time he wrote this!

Things, of course, improved a little as he grew older. But even a generation later Noah Webster had about the same complaint to make: “Our learning is superficial in a shameful degree; . . . our colleges are disgracefully destitute of books and philosophical apparatus, . . . and I am shamed to own that scarcely a branch of science can be fully investigated in America for want of books, especially original works. As to libraries, we have no such things. There are no more than three or four tolerable libraries in America, and these are extremely imperfect. Great numbers of the most valuable authors have not found their way across the Atlantic. . . . As to classical learning, history, (civil and ecclesiastical), mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, botany and natural history, excepting here and there a rare instance of a man who is eminent in some one of these branches, we may be said to have no learning at all, or a mere smattering.”⁴

In the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century Massachusetts lost her intellectual hegemony to Philadelphia, New York, Hartford and Williamsburg, Va. The Hartford Wits and Benjamin Franklin became the leaders of thought, displacing Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather. The difference thus made in the quality of the literature pro-

¹ Quoted in Van Tyne. p. 343.

² Van Tyne. pp. 344-345.

³ John Adams. Works, edited by Charles Francis Adams. Boston. 1853. Vol. II. p. 13.

⁴ Quoted in Henry Adams, “History of the United States.” Vol. I. p. 63.

duced, however, — that is, in *belles lettres* — was very small. In other words, it remained negligible. The best thought of the time, naturally enough, was given to political theorizing. It was excellent political theorizing, and at least two of its products, the *Federalist* and the Declaration of Independence, were excellent literature beside. But the imaginative writing of the time continued on a low level. The fact is that nothing memorable as *belles lettres* was written on these shores before 1817, the year Bryant's "Thanatopsis" appeared. All else before it was bad imitation of Pope and the other giants of the age of Anne. In this respect Bryant may be called the father of American literature.

CHAPTER II

The Fathers of the Revolution

Introductory Notes

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*Introductory Notes*¹

REVOLUTIONARY SENTIMENT WAS SLOW IN GROWING IN THE Colonies. "The truth is that those who were willing to risk themselves or their property in the cause of independence, and die in the last ditch, were comparatively few."² John Adams said that about one-third of the people were opposed to the measures of the Revolution in all its stages. "The great problem of the patriot leaders, Adams admitted in after years, was to keep the spirit of protest and revolt burning with equal intensity in the Thirteen Colonies, or, as he said more crisply, to get the thirteen clocks to strike at one time."³ What was inevitable in 1776 was unthinkable in 1760.

The earlier policy of Great Britain toward the Colonies was one of salutary neglect, under which they had grown in wealth. When the mother country tightened its grip with the Stamp Act there naturally arose a protest. But even then the leading lights were against drastic measures, mainly for purely business reasons. The communities along the Atlantic Coast, from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania, were engaged in ship-building and the carrying trade, and were keenly appreciative of the economic value of belonging to the British Empire. They were always for moderation. Withdrawal from the Empire, to them, meant the loss of vital business advantages. In the settlements of the tidewater region, from Maryland to Georgia, the prevailing sentiment was radically different. Their peoples were mainly plantation producers, and the chief mode of life, outside Charleston, the

¹ For much of the material in this section I am indebted to the following sources: "The Struggle for American Independence," by Sydney George Fisher. Philadelphia. 1908. Vol. I; "Samuel Adams," by Ralph Volney Harlow. N. Y. 1923; "New Viewpoints in American History," by Arthur Meier Schlesinger. N. Y. 1926. Ch. VII, "The American Revolution"; and "American Political Writing, 1760-1789," by William MacDonald, in Vol. I of "The Cambridge History of American Literature."

² Fisher. p. 255. See also Chapter VII, "Radical Progress and the Conservative Reaction," in Harlow, pp. 144-168.

³ Schlesinger. p. 161.

one big town in their midst, was rural. Because of the wasteful system of marketing in vogue among them, and because of the costly British shipping to which they had to submit, since it was the only kind they had, they were fairly regularly in a morass of indebtedness to British merchants. They were therefore very susceptible to revolutionary talk. The same was true of the frontier people of all the provinces, who were self-sustaining and equalitarian in politics, and thus very hostile to all attempts to curb their liberties.

The Stamp Act, with its numerous restrictions, united these three elements of colonial society. The radicals took the lead in the fight to abolish it. "Meanwhile, the merchants began to see that in organizing their communities for peaceful resistance to Great Britain they were unavoidably releasing disruptive forces which, like Frankenstein's monster, they were finding it impossible to control."¹ In May, 1770, Parliament repealed the Townshend duties, whereupon the merchants were willing to revert to their former status of subjects to the British crown, but the radicals were already too strong. Nevertheless, the years 1770-1773 were politically calm and materially prosperous. "The merchants had grown to look askance at a doctrine of home rule which left it uncertain who was to rule at home. As a class they eagerly agreed with the merchant politician Thomas Cushing that 'high points about the supreme authority of Parliament' should best 'fall asleep.'"² But in May, 1773, Parliament passed a new tea act which served to throw the merchants back into the fold of the radicals. Samuel Adams instigated the celebrated Boston Tea Party, and Hell was let loose. The Tea Party was a turning point in the course of events both in America and Britain. Even then the moderates were against separation and were willing to pay for the tea lost, but things had already gone too far with the people. When the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in September, 1774, the radicals were in the saddle, and the Revolution was inevitable.

The "nobodies" jumped into power, and no amount of argumentation could deflect them from their intentions. They turned against their "betters" and dared them to do their worst. In the Fall of 1774, in Charleston, S. C., a minister was dismissed by his congregation "for his audacity in . . . saying that *mechanics* and country *clowns* had no right to dispute about politics, or what kings, lords and commons

¹ Schlesinger. p. 172. See also "The Eve of the Revolution," by Carl Becker. New Haven. 1918. p. 56 ff.

² *Ibid.* p. 173.

had done." The Newport *Mercury* for September 26 of that year, after reporting this incident, commented on it thus: "All such divines should be taught to know that mechanics and country clowns (infamously so called) are the real and absolute masters of kings, lords, commons & priests."

These mechanics and clowns were the real fathers of the Revolution. It was they who whipped Washington and Jefferson and Franklin and all the other putative fathers into line. It was they who gave tone to the Rebellion. It was they who determined its ideology and even its strategy on the field of battle. Viewed in retrospect their logic was by no means water-tight. "At best, an exposition of the political theories of the anti-parliamentary party is an account of their retreat from one strategic position to another. Abandoning a view that based their liberties on charter grants, they appealed to their constitutional rights as Englishmen; and when this position became untenable, they invoked the doctrine of the rights of man. . . . Without discounting in any way the propagandist value attaching to popular shibboleths as such, it may as well be admitted that the colonists would have lost their cause if the decision had turned upon an impartial consideration of the legal principles involved."¹ But logic has little to do with history.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 179.

CHAPTER III

*The Leaders of Revolutionary Thought
in Massachusetts*

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The Leaders of Revolutionary Thought in Massachusetts

A. THE LAY RADICALS

I. JAMES OTIS

JAMES OTIS WAS UNWITTINGLY THE FIRST MAN IN MASSACHUSETTS to give dignity to the agitations of the radicals therein. He changed his mind often. He was for and against separation, though it must be added that he never came out flat-footed against it. "He was demanding justice, not revolution; he was urging the government not to abuse its powers."¹ His ideas were not new, but it was he who gave them the first push into the world. As for his numerous pamphlets, "though written in a style rugged and not elegant, [they] are courageous, telling argument for civil liberty and equality."² He "seemed all eccentricity," and toward the end became insane, but it is to the everlasting glory of his memory that the human vices of servility and venality always chafed him, and that he risked station and even life to make his objections against them public.

He was born on February 5, 1725, in West Barnstable, Mass., and was graduated from Harvard in 1743.³ He became a prominent attorney in Boston. In 1761 he was advocate-general of Massachusetts, but he resigned the office rather than defend the Writs of Assistance. His speech against them is one of his masterpieces. The year before he had published "The Rudiments of Latin Prosody, with A Dissertation on Letters, and the Principles of Harmony in Poetic and Prosaic Composition, Collected from the Best Writers." It was used as a text for a time at Harvard. He also composed a similar work on Greek

¹ "The Causes of the War of Independence," by Charles H. Van Tyne. Boston. 1922. p. 180.

² *Ibid.* p. 179.

³ For the biographical material here I am indebted to "The Life of James Otis of Massachusetts: Containing also Notices of Some Contemporary Characters and Events. From the Year 1760 to 1775," by William Tudor. Boston. 1823. It is still the best in print.

prosody, but it remained in MS., and eventually was lost. "He was a passionate admirer of the Greek poets, particularly of Homer. . . . His literary taste was formed and matured by the most thorough classical study, and his tenets in criticism were those of the old school. . . . [He once said], 'If you want to read poetry, read Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Poe, and throw all the rest in the fire, these are all that are worth reading.'"¹ He was, of course, familiar with the writings of all the English political philosophers.

In 1762 he published a "Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives," in which he argued against the parliamentary taxation. It added greatly to his fame. Two years later he wrote "Rights of the British Colonies Asserted & Proved," wherein he seemed to recognize parliamentary supremacy, and because of which the radicals cooled toward him. But he won them back the next year with "Considerations on Behalf of the Colonists." In June, 1765, he made a motion in the House for a Congress of all the Colonies. It was carried, and thus was created the Stamp Act Congress which met in New York in the Fall of the same year. Needless to say, he was one of the leaders in its deliberations. Several times he was elected Speaker of the Massachusetts General Court, but Governor Bernard vetoed his election each time. In 1769 the customs officials at Boston accused him of treason so he let loose a terrific denunciation of them in the *Boston Gazette*. A bit later he met one of the commissioners in a coffee-house, had a fight with him, and as a result received a serious cut in the head. He sued the commissioner, a Mr. Robinson, and won £2000 as damages, but relinquished the money for a written apology. He returned to the Legislature in 1771, but remained there only a short time. The injury he received in the head in his scuffle with Robinson turned out to be more serious than first suspected, and for the rest of his life he was almost always insane. He was killed by lightning in Andover on May 23, 1783.

Otis first leaped into high public prominence with his celebrated speech against the Writs of Assistance. It "is conveniently regarded as the first in the chain of events which led directly and irresistibly to revolution and independence. It marks the tone of public opinion in Massachusetts in 1761, as Patrick Henry's speech in the Parson's Cause, two years later, gives evidence of the condition of public opin-

¹ "The Life of James Otis of Massachusetts: Containing also Notices of Some Contemporary Characters and Events. From the Year 1760 to 1775." Tudor. pp. 16-17.

ion in Virginia in 1763.”¹ The circumstances of the speech were later described by John Adams thus:

When the British ministry received from General Amherst his despatches, announcing the conquest of Montreal, and the subsequent annihilation of the French government in America, in 1759, they immediately conceived the design, and took the resolution, of conquering the English Colonies, and subjecting them to the unlimited authority of Parliament. With this view and intention they sent orders and instructions to the collector of the customs in Boston, Mr. Charles Paxton, to apply to the civil authority for writs of assistance, to enable the custom-house officers, tide-waiters, land-waiters, and all, to command all sheriffs and constables, &c., to attend and aid in breaking open houses, stores, shops, cellars, ships, bales, trunks, chests, casks, packages of all sorts, to search for goods, wares, and merchandize, which had been imported against the prohibitions or without paying the taxes imposed by certain acts of Parliament, called the acts of trade, that is, by certain parliamentary statutes, which had been procured to be passed from time, for a century before, by a combination of selfish intrigues between West India planters and North American royal governors. These acts never had been executed as revenue laws, and there never had been a time, when they would have been or could have been obeyed as such.²

Paxton thought it imprudent to commence operations in Boston. So he instructed his deputy collector in Salem, one Cockle, to apply to the Superior Court, then sitting in Salem, for writs of assistance. This was in November, 1760. Chief Justice Stephen Sewall expressed great doubt about the legality of such writs. But since the Crown made the application it had to be heard and determined, so the court ordered the question argued at the next February term in Boston. Meanwhile Sewall died, and Lieut.-Gov. Hutchinson was appointed in his place. His appointment was obviously made for deciding the question in favor of the Crown. The Boston and Salem merchants were alarmed,

¹ "James Otis's Speech on the Writs of Assistance. 1761." *American History Leaflets, Colonial and Constitutional*. No. 33. N. Y. 1912. Edited by A. B. Hart and Edward Channing. p. 1.

² "President John Adams' Tribute to James Otis in Letter to William Tudor, dated Quincy, 29 March, 1817." *Old South Leaflets*. No. 179. p. 3.

so they appealed to Otis and Oxenbridge Thacher, two young but promising lawyers, to defend them. They offered them large fees, "but Otis, and, I believe Thacher, would accept of none. 'In such a cause,' said Otis, 'I despise all fees.'"¹

The day of the argument arrived, and Thacher and Otis set to. The first, according to John Adams, writing many years later,

argued with the softness of manners, the ingenuity and cool reasoning, which were remarkable in his amiable character. But Otis was a flame of fire!—with a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, and a torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away everything before him. American independence was then and there born; the seeds of patriots and heroes were then and there sown, to defend the vigorous youth, the *non sine Diis animocus infans*. Every man of a crowded audience appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against writs of assistance. Then and there was the first scene of the first act of opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain. Then and there the child Independence was born. In fifteen years, namely in 1776, he grew up to manhood, and declared himself free.²

Present knowledge of Otis' speech is derived entirely from the minutes of the evidence taken by John Adams, who was not yet admitted to the bar. The MS. of the minutes or a copy of them was stolen from Adams' desk, and printed in the Worcester *Spy* for April 29, 1773. Minot printed the *Spy* version in his great history of Massachusetts, Volume II, pages 89–99. The account in Tudor's "Life of Otis," reprinted below, is practically the work of Adams.³ Tudor and Adams were in correspondence on the subject in 1818. The Adams version of the speech, no doubt, differs considerably from the original, but it gives the real flavor of the pamphleteering and political speech-making of the time, and is thus worth reproducing *in toto*:

¹ "President John Adams' Tribute to James Otis in Letter to William Tudor, dated Quincy, 29 March, 1817." Old South Leaflets, No. 179. p. 4. Parrington, in Vol. I, p. 205, says, "The Otises had gone over to the opposition because the father had been disappointed on the occasion of Hutchinson's elevation to the coveted Chief-Justiceship." This suspicion has persisted in American historical writing ever since the event, but it is still no more than a suspicion. There is no conclusive evidence in its favor.

² *Ibid.* p. 4.

³ An excellent monograph on this subject is "James Otis's Argument Against the Writs of Assistance, 1761." Remarks made before the Mass. Hist. Soc., December 11, 1890, by Dr. Samuel A. Green, Cambridge, 1890. See especially p. 7 ff.

May it please Your Honours:

I was desired by one of the Court to look into the books, and consider the question now before them concerning the Writs of Assistance. I have accordingly considered it, and now appear not only in obedience to your order, but likewise in behalf of the inhabitants of this town, who have presented another petition, and out of regard to the liberties of the subject. And I take this opportunity to declare, that whether under a fee or not, (for in such cases I despise a fee,) I will to my dying day oppose with all the powers and faculties God has given me, all such instruments of slavery on the one hand, and villainy on the other, as this writ of assistance is.

It appears to me the worst instrument of arbitrary power, the most destructive of English liberty and the fundamental principles of law, that ever was found in an English law book. I must therefore pray your honours' patience and attention to the whole range of an argument, that may perhaps appear uncommon in many things, as well as to points of learning that are more remote and unusual: that the whole tendency of my design may the more easily be perceived, the conclusions better descend, and the force of them be better felt. I shall not think much of my pains in this cause, as I engaged in it from principle. I was solicited to argue this cause as Advocate General; and because I would not, I have been charged with desertion from my office. To this charge I can give a very sufficient answer. I renounced that office, and I argue this cause from the same principle; and I argue it with the greater pleasure, as it is in favour of British liberty, at a time when we hear the greatest monarch upon earth declaring from his throne, that he glories in the name of Briton, and that the privileges of his people are dearer to him than the most valuable prerogatives of his crown; and it is in opposition to a kind of power, the exercise of which in former periods of English history, cost one King of England his head, and another his throne. I have taken more pains in this cause, than I ever will take again, although my engaging in this and another popular cause has raised much resentment. But I think I can sincerely declare, that I cheerfully submit myself to every odious name for conscience sake: and from my soul I despise all those, whose guilt, malice, or folly has made them my foes. Let the consequences be what they will, I am determined to proceed. The only

principles of public conduct, that are worthy of a gentleman or a man, are to sacrifice estate, ease, health, and applause, and even life, to the sacred calls of his country.

These manly sentiments, in private life, make the good citizen; in public life, the patriot and the hero. I do not say, that when brought to the test, I shall be invincible. I pray God I may never be brought to the melancholy trial, but if ever I should, it will then be known how far I can reduce to practice, principles, which I know to be founded in truth. In the meantime I will proceed to the subject of this writ.

Your Honours will find in the old books concerning the office of a Justice of the Peace, precedents of general warrants to search suspected houses. But in more modern books, you will find only special warrants to search such and such houses, specially named, in which the complainant has been sworn that he suspects his goods are concealed; and will find it adjudged, that special warrants only are legal. In the same manner I rely on it, that the writ prayed for in this petition, being general, is illegal. It is a power that places the liberty of every man in the hands of every petty officer. I say I admit that special writs of assistance, to such special places, may be granted to certain persons on oath; but I deny that the writ now prayed for can be granted, for I beg leave to make some observations of the writ itself, before I proceed to the other acts of Parliament. In the first place, the writ is universal, being directed to "all and singular Justices, Sheriffs, Constables, and all other officers and subjects"; so that, in short, it is directed to every subject in the King's dominions. Every one with this writ may be a tyrant in a legal manner, also may control, imprison, or murder any one within the realm. In the next place, it is perpetual, there is no return. A man is accountable to no person for his doings. Every man may reign secure in his petty tyranny, and spread terror and desolation around him, until the trump of the archangel shall excite different emotions in his soul. In the third place, a person with this writ, in the day time, may enter the houses, shops, &c. at will, and command all to assist him. Fourthly, by this writ, not only deputies, &c. but even their menial servants, are allowed to lord it over us. What is this but to have the curse of Canaan with a witness on us; to be the servant of servants, the most despicable of God's creation? Now one of the most essential branches of Eng-

lish liberty is the freedom of one's house. A man's house is his castle; and whilst he is quiet, he is as well guarded as a prince in his castle. This writ, if it should be declared legal, would totally annihilate this privilege. Custom-house officers may enter our homes when they please; we are commanded to permit their entry. Their menial servants may enter, may break locks, bars, and everything in their way: and whether they break through malice or revenge, no man, no court, can inquire. Bare suspicion without oath is sufficient. This wanton exercise of this power is not a chimerical suggestion of a heated brain. I will mention some facts. Mr. Pew had one of these writs, and when Mr. Ware succeeded him, he endorsed this writ over to Mr. Ware: so that, these writs are negotiable from one officer to another; and so your Honours have no opportunity of judging the persons to whom this vast power is delegated. Another instance is this: Mr. Justice Wally had called this same Mr. Ware before him, by a constable, to answer for a breach of the Sabbath-day acts, or that of profane swearing. As soon as he had finished, Mr. Ware asked him if he had done. He replied, Yes. Well then, said Mr. Ware, I will shew you a little of my power. I command you to permit me to search your house for uncustomed goods; and went on to search the house from the garret to the cellar; and then served the constable in the same manner! But to shew another absurdity in this writ, if it should be established, I insist upon it every person by the 14th Charles second, has this power as well as the Custom-House officers. The words are "it shall be lawful, for any person or persons authorized, &c." What a scene does this open! Every man prompted by revenge, ill humor, or wantonness to inspect the inside of his neighbour's house, may get a writ of assistance. Others will ask it from self-defense; one arbitrary exertion will provoke another, until society be involved in tumult and in blood.¹

According to John Adams, Otis then plunged into a

dissertation on the rights of man in a state of nature. He asserted that every man, merely natural, was an independent sovereign, subject to no law, but the law written in his heart, and

¹ "James Otis's Speech on the Writs of Assistance. . . ." American History Leaflets. . . . No. 33. pp. 14-18.

revealed to him by his Maker, in the constitution of his nature, and the inspiration of his understanding and his conscience. His right to his life, his liberty, no created being could rightfully contest. Nor was his right to his property less incontestible. The club that he had snapped from a tree, for a staff or for defence, was his own. His bow and arrow were his own; if by a pebble he had killed a partridge or a squirrel, it was his own. No creature, man or beast, had a right to take it from him. If he had taken an eel, or a smelt, or a sculpin, it was his property. In short, he sported upon this topic with as much wit and humour, and at the same time with so much indisputable truth and reason, that he was not less entertaining than instructive. He asserted, that these rights were inherent and inalienable. That they never would be surrendered or alienated, but by ideots or madmen, and all the acts of ideots and lunatics are void, and not obligatory, by all the laws of God and man. Nor were the poor negroes forgotten. Not a Quaker in Philadelphia, or Mr. Jefferson of Virginia, ever asserted the rights of negroes in stronger terms.¹

Adams then describes the conclusion of the trial:

The Crown, by its agents, accumulated construction upon construction, and inference upon inference, as the giants heaped Pelion upon Ossa. I hope it is not impious or profane to compare Otis to Ovid's Jupiter; but *misso fulmine fregit Olympum, et excussit subjecto Pelio Ossam*. He dashed this whole building to pieces, and scattered the pulverized atoms to the four winds; and no judge, lawyer, or crown officer dared to say, why do ye so. . . . In plain English, by cool, patient comparison of the phraseology of our charters, the merits of the colonists, &c. he shewed the pretensions to introduce the revenue acts, and these arbitrary and mechanical Writs of Assistance, as an instrument for the execution of them, to be so irrational; by his wit he represented the attempt as so ludicrous; and by his dignified reprobation of an impudent attempt to impose on the people of America, he raised such a storm of indignation, that even Hutchinson, who had been appointed on purpose to sanction the writ, dared not utter a word in its favour. . . .²

¹ "James Otis's Speech on the Writs of Assistance. . . ." American History Leaflets. . . . No. 33. p. 18.

² *Ibid.* p. 29.

At the conclusion of the arguments Chief Justice Hutchinson said that the court would continue the question until the next term, but nothing was ever heard of it again. Otis unquestionably did the trick with his five hour¹ speech. But John Adams' appraisal of it as the very cornerstone of the Revolution and as a classic of oratory was probably far-fetched. "The speech was not to such an extent epoch-making. Both orator and audience were thoroughly loyal and had no thought of a contest of arms with the mother country. The principle asserted was only a re-avowal of what . . . had been often mentioned."²

Of his published writings Otis's "Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives" of Massachusetts, printed in 1762, was unquestionably the most popular. John Adams, with his usual exaggeration, said of it:

How many volumes are concentrated in this little fugitive pamphlet, the production of a few hurried hours, amidst the continual solicitation of a crowd of clients; for his business at the bar at the time was very extensive, and of the first importance, and amidst the host of politicians, suggesting their plans and schemes, claiming his advice and directions! Look over the Declarations of Rights and Wrongs, issued by Congress in 1774. Look into the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Look into the writings of Dr. Price, and Dr. Priestley. Look into all the French constitutions of government and to cap the climax, look into Mr. Thomas Paine's "Common Sense," "Crisis," and "Rights of Man;" what can you find that is not to be found in solid substance in this "Vindication of the House of Representatives" ?³

The Governor and Council had made expenditures without the knowledge of, or contrary to, the majority will of the House. Otis drew up a remonstrance, in which he said:

Justice to ourselves, and to our constituents, obliges us to remonstrate, against the method of making or increasing establishments by the Governor and Council.

¹ Green. p. 4.

² "Samuel Adams," by James K. Hosmer. Cambridge, Mass. 1900. p. 45.

³ Quoted in Tudor. p. 123.

It is in effect taking from the house, their most darling privilege, the right of originating all taxes.

It is in short annihilating one branch of the legislature. And when once the representatives of a people give up this privilege, the government will very soon become arbitrary.

No necessity can be sufficient to justify a house of representatives, in giving up such a privilege; for it would be of little consequence to the people, whether they were subject to George, or Lewis, the King of Great Britain, or the French king, if both were arbitrary, as both would be, if both could levy taxes without Parliament.

Had this [keeping a certain number of men on the ship *Sloop* without authority of the House] been the first instance of the kind, we might not have troubled your Excellency about it; but lest the matter should grow into precedent; we earnestly beseech your excellency, as you regard the peace and welfare of the province, that no measures of this nature be taken for the future, let the advice of the Council be what it may.¹

When the next to last paragraph was read in the House a Mr. Paine, from Worcester, yelled, "Treason, treason!" The resolution was nevertheless passed by the House, but the Governor returned it, saying that the King's name was "improperly treated," and recommending that it should not be entered in the journal. The House complied with his request. A bit later Otis wrote his celebrated "Vindication," in which he gave a complete account of the case, and attempted to clear the House of any wrong-doing in passing the original remonstrance. The following is the most powerful extract from it. The allusion at the beginning is to the "treasonable" passage.

The first question that would occur to a philosopher, if any question should be made about it, would be, whether the position were true. But truth being of little importance to most modern politicians, we shall touch lightly upon that topic, and proceed to inquiries of a more interesting nature. That arbitrary government implies the worst of temporal evils, or at least the continual danger of them, is certain. That a man would be pretty equally subjected to these evils under any arbitrary government,

¹ Quoted in Tudor, pp. 119-120.

is clear. That I should die very soon after my head should be cut off, whether by a sabre or a broad sword, whether chopped off to gratify a tyrant by the christian name of *Tom, Dick, or Harry*, is evident. That the name of the tyrant would be of no more avail to save my life, than the name of the executioner, needs no proof. It is therefore manifestly of no importance what a prince's christian name is, if he be arbitrary, any more indeed, than if he were not arbitrary. So the whole amount of this dangerous proposition may at least in one view be reduced to this, viz: *It is of little importance what a king's christian name is*. It is indeed of importance that a king, a governor, and all other good christians should have a christian name, but whether Edward, Francis, or William, is of none, that I can discern. It is being a rule to put the most mild and favourable construction upon words, that they can possibly bear, it will follow that this proposition is a very harmless one, that cannot by any means tend to prejudice his majesty's person, crown, dignity, or cause, all which I deem equally sacred with his Excellency.

Some fine gentlemen have charged the expression as indelicate. This is a capital impeachment in politics, and therefore demands our most serious attention. . . . To those who have been taught to bow at the name of a king, with as much ardor and devotion as a papist at the sight of a crucifix, the assertion under examination may appear harsh; but there is an immense difference between the sentiments of a British house of Commons remonstrating, and that of a courtier cringing for a favour. A house of representatives, here at least, bears an equal proportion to a governor, with that of a house of Commons to the king. There is indeed one difference in favour of a house of Representatives; when a house of Commons address the king, they speak to their sovereign, who is truly the most august personage upon earth: when a house of Representatives remonstrate to a governor, they speak to a fellow subject, though a superior who is undoubtedly entitled to decency and respect; but I hardly think to quite so much reverence as his master. . . .

What cause of so bitter repentance, *again and again*, could possibly have taken place, if this clause had been printed in the Journal, I can't imagine. If the case be fairly represented, I guess the province can be in no danger from a house of Representatives daring to speak plain English, when they are complaining

of a grievance. I sincerely believe the house had no disposition to enter into contest with the governor and council. Sure I am, that the promoters of this address had no such view. On the contrary, there is the highest reason to presume, that the house of Representatives will at all times rejoice in the prosperity of the governor and council, and contribute their utmost assistance, in supporting those two branches of the legislature, in all their just rights and pre-eminence. But the house is and ought to be jealous and tenacious of its own privileges; these are a sacred deposit intrusted by the people, and the jealousy of them is a goodly jealousy.¹

In 1764 Otis wrote "The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved." It is 120 pages long, and is really a continuation of the line of thinking begun in the "Vindication." Professor Tyler thinks highly of it, and is of the opinion that it is the only work of Otis's "on which rests his reputation as a serious political thinker."² It is really no better than the "Vindication." It is a fine piece of pamphleteering, but all the ideas in it are to be found in its predecessor, and much more eloquently put. Speaking of the rights of man Otis says:

An original, supreme, sovereign, absolute, and uncontrollable earthly power must exist in and preside over every society, from whose final decisions there can be no appeal but directly to heaven. It is, therefore, originally and ultimately in the people; . . . and never did in fact freely, nor can they rightfully, make an absolute, unlimited renunciation of this divine right. It is ever in the nature of the thing given in trust, and on a condition the performance of which no mortal can dispense with, namely, that the person or persons on whom the sovereignty is conferred by the people, shall incessantly consult their good. Tyranny of all kinds is to be abhorred, whether it be in the hands of one, or of the few, or of the many.³

This is straight Locke, and might indeed have been written by another American disciple of his who lived fifty years before, the

¹ Quoted in Tudor. pp. 127-132.

² "The Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-1783," by Moses Coit Tyler. N. Y. 1905. Vol. I. 48.

³ *Op. cit.* pp. 12-13.

Rev. John Wise. In the same pamphlet Otis admitted that the Colonies "are subject to and dependent on Great Britain," and that "the British Parliament has an undoubted and lawful authority to make acts for the general good, that, by naming them, shall and ought to be equally binding as upon the other subjects of Great Britain within the realm," and that, further, no legislature, "supreme or subordinate, has a right to make itself arbitrary."¹ These statements were plainly contradictory, but the radicals gobbled them up.

In 1764 Martin Howard, a prominent Newport, R. I., lawyer, wrote anonymously "A Letter from a Gentleman in Halifax to his Friend in Rhode Island," in which he attacked the idea of direct colonial representation in Parliament. It was known as "the Halifax libel." Otis answered it the following year with "A Vindication of the British Colonies Against the Aspersions of the Halifax Gentleman in his Letter to a Rhode Island Friend." Howard then answered Otis with "A Defense of the Letter from a Gentleman at Halifax to his Friend at Rhode Island." Otis came back with "Brief Remarks on the Defense of the Halifax Libel." In it he sailed into the Tories in his most bitter manner, calling them all "a little, dirty, drinking, drabbling, contaminated knot of thieves, beggars and transports, . . . collected from the four winds of the earth, and made up of Turks, Jews and other Infidels with a few renegado Christians and Catholics."² The upshot of it all was that Howard was apprehended, and so beaten by a mob of radicals that he was forced to flee to Britain for his life.

In 1765, Soame Jenyns, then for more than twenty years a member of Parliament, wrote a twenty page pamphlet entitled, "The Objections to the Taxation of Our American Colonies by the Legislature of Great Britain, Briefly Considered." He argued in favor of the right of Parliament to tax the Colonies, and the necessity for it. No intelligent person, he said, would take the trouble to defend such things "had not many arguments been lately flung out, both in papers and conversation, which, with insolence equal to their absurdity, deny them both . . . [These arguments] are usually mixed up with several patriotic and favorite words, such as liberty, property, Englishmen, and so forth, which are apt to make strong impressions on that more numerous part of mankind, who have ears but no understanding."³ As for the matter of taxation without representation, he brought up the old English argument that many English towns were not

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 49-55.

² *Op. cit.* p. 5.

³ *Op. cit.* pp. 3-4.

directly or in any other way represented, and that yet they did not feel that an injustice was being done them.

The pamphlet, naturally, brought forth a storm of replies from the colonists, but the most notable of them was Otis's "Considerations on Behalf of the Colonies, in a Letter to a Noble Lord." It was probably his best piece of invective.

To what purpose is it to ring everlasting changes to the colonists on the cases of Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield, who return no members? If these now so considerable places are not represented, they ought to be! . . . Mr. Jenyns says, "By far the major part of the inhabitants of Great Britain are non electors." The more is the pity! "Every Englishman," he tells us, "is taxed; and yet not one in twenty is represented." . . . So, a small minority rules and governs the majority! . . . What *ab initio* could give an absolute, unlimited right to one twentieth of a community, to govern the other nineteen by their sovereign will and pleasure?¹

Otis is greatly irritated by the title of Mr. Jenyns's pamphlet. " . . . Our American Colonies . . ."

Whose Colonies can the creature mean? The minister's Colonies? No, surely. Whose then,—his own? I never heard he had any Colonies: "Nec gladio, nec arcu, nec astu vicerunt." He must mean his majesty's American Colonies. His majesty's colonies they are, and I hope and trust ever will be . . . Every garreter, from the environs of Fleet Street, to the purlieu of St. James's, has lately talked of "his" and "my" and "our" Colonies, and of the "rascally" colonists. . . . I cannot see why the American peasants may not with as much propriety speak of their cities of London and Westminster, of their isles of Britain, Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, Sark, and the Orcades, and of the "rivers and rivulets thereof," and consider them all but as appendages of their sheepcotes and goose-pens.²

Otis then admits that Parliament is supreme, but he counsels it to be lenient with taxes. He ends with these moving words:

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 6-10.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 13-14.

Had I the honor to be minister to the first, the best, monarch in the universe, and trustee for the bravest people, except perhaps one, that ever existed, I might reason in this manner: The Roman Eagle is dead. The British Lion lives. Strange revolutions! The savage, roving Britons, who fled before Julius Cæsar, who were vanquished by his successors, Hengist and Horsa, who cut the throats of the Lurdanes, and fell under the Norman bondage, are after all, the masters of the sea, the lords of the ocean, the terror of Europe, and the envy of the universe! Can Briton rise higher? Yes. How? . . . Revolutions have been. They may be again. Nay, in the course of time, they must be. Provinces have not been ever kept in subjection. What, then, is to be done? Why, it is of little importance to my master, whether a thousand years hence the colonies remain dependent on Briton or not; my business is to fall on the only means to keep them ours for the longest term possible. How can that be done? Why, in one word, it must be by nourishing and cherishing them, as the apple of your eye. All history will prove that provinces have never been displaced to independency, while well treated. Well, then, they shall be!¹

The "Considerations" was very popular. It first appeared in the *Boston Gazette* for September 4, 1765, and was reprinted in London the same year. There it passed through two editions in a short while.

Tyler said of Otis: "[He] was often in his own writing an unrestrained barbarian. Disproportion, incoherence, exaggeration, coarseness, inaccuracy—these are faults not uncommon in his papers; and along with these, was a certain wildness of manner which early brought him, especially in England, the imputation of madness."² This, it seems to me, is being unjust to the man. He was surely no great political philosopher, nor a particularly graceful writer. But he made no pretensions to being either. The Latin quotations and literary allusions he employed were the common stock of Harvard graduates in those days. He was a pamphleteer first and last. He belonged to the advance guard of the Revolution, and could spare no time to polish his phrases. His writings, as Tudor, his most authoritative biographer points out, betray "carelessness, haste, and a disdain of revising thoughts, thrown off with the rapidity of a powerful, impatient spirit."³ But there is "learning, wit and argumentative strength" in

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 30-32.

² Tyler. Vol. I. p. 35.

³ Tudor. p. 172.

them.¹ His pamphlets are not literature in the grand sense. They are scarcely literature at all. But in their day his ideas had tremendous force, and the English in which he presented them was nearly as good as was to be had from any other politician in New England.²

2. OXENBRIDGE THACHER

Oxenbridge Thacher, who was associated with Otis in the arguments against the Writs of Assistance,³ was a much calmer and less able man than he. He was graduated from Harvard in 1738, and was ordained shortly thereafter. But he was a failure in the ministry, so he tried his hand at the law, in which profession he attained considerable distinction. In 1761 he collected a number of his newspaper articles dealing with financial matters, and published them in booklet form under the title, "Considerations on Lowering the Value of Gold Coins within the Province of Massachusetts." He also wrote on political affairs. His best known pamphlet in that field was "The Sentiments of a British American." It was published in September, 1764, and was a quiet, good-humored arraignment of the government tax policy. Though only sixteen pages long, it was packed with solid argument. Thacher ended his case against Great Britain thus:

These are the sentiments of a British American, which he ventures to expose to the public, with an honest well-meant freedom. Born in one of the Colonies, and descended from ancestors who were among the first planters of that Colony, he is not ashamed to avow a love to the country that gave him birth; yet he hath never exulted in the name of Briton. He hath ever thought all the inhabitants in the remotest dominions of Great Britain interested in the wealth, the prosperity, and the glory of the capital. And he desireth ever to retain these filial sentiments. . . . He concludes all with his most ardent wishes, that the happy island

¹ Tudor. p. 172.

² Charles F. Richardson, in "American Literature, 1607-1885," N. Y., 1887, Vol. I, p. 183, says of Otis: "He was neither consistent nor discreet, but the public, often inconsistent and indiscreet, is apt to favor a spokesman of similar temper."

³ Edward Channing, in his "History of the United States," Vol. III. N. Y., 1924, says, "From a technical, legal point of view, there was little to be said in reply [to Gridley, counsel for the government.] What little there was to say was well said by Oxenbridge Thacher." p. 4.

of Great Britain may grow in wealth, in power, and glory, to yet greater degrees; that the conquests it makes over foreign enemies may serve the more to protect the internal liberties of its subjects; that her Colonies, now happily extended, may grow in filial affection and dutiful submission to her, their mother, and that she, in return, may never forget her parental affections; that the whole English Empire, united by the strongest bonds of love and interest, formidable to the tyrants and oppressors of the earth, may retain its own virtue, and happily possess immortality.¹

3. JOHN ADAMS

John Adams,² second President of the United States, was born on October 30, 1735, in Quincy, Mass. He was the oldest son of a prosperous farmer. On his graduation from Harvard in 1755 he was slated for the ministry, but his views of religion were at variance with the orthodox ones, so he studied law, and was admitted to the Massachusetts bar in 1758. Otis's argument against the Writs of Assistance definitely turned him against Parliament. In 1761 he wrote the instructions for the town of Braintree to its representatives in the Massachusetts General Court. The instructions were later adopted by forty other towns. In the same year he contributed four vigorous articles to the *Boston Gazette* against the Stamp Act. Seven years later they were issued in a pamphlet under the title, "A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law." It was one of the best written and most celebrated tracts of its time. At the beginning of his career he was somewhat conservative, and served as counsel for the British soldiers accused of murder in the Boston Massacre. He won acquittals for all of them. From 1744-1777 he was one of the most prominent members of the Continental Congress. With time he became more and more radical. He was one of the champions of the Declaration of Independence, and was a close friend of Washington and Jefferson.

His greatest fame he won during the Revolution and afterward. But he also labored mightily before, and some of the most effective

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 16.

² For the biographical material here I am indebted to Volume I of the official Life, "The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States. With a Life of the Author," by his grandson, Charles Francis Adams. Boston. 1851. In 10 vols. I shall hereafter refer to this work as the Life.

writing of the time is to be found in his newspaper articles and speeches.

Early in the year 1774 there appeared in the *Massachusetts Gazette and Post Boy* a series of articles by "Massachusettensis," defending the government's tax policy. Adams first thought that the author was Jonathan Sewall, but he was really Daniel Dulany, as Adams himself inclined to believe in 1819, when he wrote a new preface for a new edition of his collected works. Adams answered Dulany with a series of articles in the *Boston Gazette*, which were later collected into the pamphlet, "Novanglus: or, a History of the Dispute with America, From its Origin, in 1754, to the Present Time; Written in 1774." It was reprinted in London and Amsterdam, and attained a wide popularity. It deserved it. It stated the case of the radicals more effectively than it had been stated before. It was full of straightforward writing and clear thinking, and betrayed a wide and commendable acquaintance with political philosophy. For example:

A small mistake in point of policy, says he, often furnishes a pretense to libel government, and persuade the people that their rulers are tyrants. This is not only untrue, but inconsistent with what he said before. The people are in their nature so gentle, that there never was a government yet in which thousands of mistakes were not overlooked. The most sensible and jealous people are so little attentive to government, that there are no instances of resistance, until repeated, multiplied oppressions have placed it beyond a doubt, that their rulers had formed settled plans to deprive them of their liberties; not to oppress an individual or a few, but to break down the fences of a free constitution, and deprive the people at large of all share in the government, and all the checks by which it is limited. Even Machiavel himself allows, that, not ingratitude to their rulers, but much love, is the constant fault of the people.

This writer is equally mistaken, when he says, the people are sure to be losers in the end. They can hardly be losers if unsuccessful; because, if they live, they can but be slaves, after an unfortunate effort, and slaves they would have been, if they had not resisted. So that nothing is lost. If they die, they cannot be said to lose, for death is better than slavery. If they succeed, their gains are immense. They preserve their liberties. The instances in antiquity which this writer alludes to are not men-

tioned, and therefore cannot be answered; but that in the country from whence we are derived, is the most unfortunate for his purpose that could have been chosen. No doubt he means, the resistance to Charles I. and the case of Cromwell. But the people of England, and the cause of liberty, truth, virtue, and humanity, gained infinite advantage by that resistance. In all human probability, liberty, civil and religious, not only in England, but in all Europe, would have been lost. Charles would doubtless have established the Romish religion, and a despotism as wild as any in the world. . . . It is true, and to be lamented, that Cromwell did not establish a government as free as he might and ought; but his government was infinitely more glorious and happy to the people than Charles's. Did not the people gain by the resistance to James II? Did not the Romans gain by the resistance to Tarquin? Without that resistance, and the liberty that was restored by it, would the great Roman orators, poets, and historians, the great teachers of humanity and politeness, the pride of human nature, and the delight and glory of mankind for seventeen hundred years, ever have existed? Did not the Romans gain by resistance to the Decemvirs? Did not the English gain by resistance to John, when *Magna Charta* was obtained? Did not the Seven United Provinces gain by resistance to Philip, Alva, and Granvelle? Did not the Swiss Cantons, the Genevans, and Grisons gain by resistance to Albert and Gessler?¹

What follows is even better :

Massachusettensis is then seized with a violent fit of anger at the clergy. It is curious to observe the conduct of the tories towards this sacred body. If a clergyman, of whatever character, preaches against the principle of the revolution, and tells the people that, upon pain of damnation, they must submit to an established government, the tories cry him up as an excellent man and a wonderful preacher, invite him to their tables, procure him missions from the society and chaplainships to the navy, and flatter him with the hopes of lawn sleeves. But if a clergyman preaches Christianity, and tells the magistrates that they were not distinguished from their brethren for their private emolument, but for the good of the people; that the people are bound in con-

¹ The Life. Vol. IV. pp. 17-18.

science to obey a good government, but are not bound to submit to one that aims at destroying all the ends of government, — oh sedition! treason!

The clergy in all ages and countries, and in this in particular, are disposed enough to be on the side of government as long as it is tolerable. If they have not been generally in the late administration on that side, it is a demonstration that the late administration has been universally odious. The clergy of this province are a virtuous, sensible, and learned set of men, and they do not take their sermons from newspapers, but from the Bible; unless it be a few, who preach passive obedience. These are not generally curious enough to read Hobbes. It is their duty to accommodate their discourses to the times, to preach against such sins as are most prevalent, and recommend such virtues as are most wanted.¹

Of even greater historical and intrinsic importance than "Novanglus" was "A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law," one of the most brilliant documents of pre-Revolutionary America. It was first printed in four installments, during the month of August, 1765, in the *Boston Gazette*, the chief radical paper in Massachusetts. The articles originally appeared without title or signature, and their authorship was first attributed to Jeremy Gridley, then at the head of the bar in the Colony. They were immediately reprinted in the *London Chronicle*, and in 1768 were published in pamphlet form by Almon. Thomas Hollis thought very highly of the series, and once said that "it is one of the very finest productions ever seen from North America."² It went into a second edition in London in 1783, and was reprinted in Philadelphia the same year. The ideas in it are not particularly novel now, but in their day, especially in North America, they were sensational. They were all the more remarkable coming from a community poor in secular books and in the throes of a bitter political struggle. The substance of them follows:

Since the promulgation of Christianity, the two greatest systems of tyranny that have sprung from the original, are the canon and the feudal law. The desire of dominion, that great principle by which we have attempted to account for so much good and so

¹ The Life. Vol. IV. pp. 55-56.

² *Ibid.* Quoted on p. 447.

much evil, is, when properly restrained, a very useful and noble movement in the human mind. But when such restraints are taken off, it becomes an encroaching, grasping, restless, and ungovernable power. Numberless have been the systems of iniquity contrived by the great for the gratification of this passion in themselves; but in none of them were they ever more successful than in the invention and establishment of the canon and the feudal law.

By the former of these, the most refined, sublime, extensive, and astonishing constitution of policy that ever was conceived by the mind of man was framed by the Romish clergy for the aggrandizement of their own order . . .; they even persuaded mankind to believe, faithfully and undoubtingly, that God Almighty had entrusted them with the keys of heaven, whose gates they might open and close at pleasure; with a power of dispensation over all the rules and obligations of morality; with authority to license all sorts of sins and crime; with a power of deposing princes and absolving subjects from allegiance; with a power of procuring or withholding the rain of heaven and the beams of the sun; with the management of earthquakes, pestilence and famine; nay, with the mysterious, awful, incomprehensible power of creating out of bread and wine the flesh and blood of God himself. All these opinions they were enabled to spread and rivet among the people by reducing their minds to a state of sordid ignorance and staring timidity, and by infusing into them a religious horror of letters and knowledge.

In the latter we find another system, similar in many respects to the former; which, although it was originally formed, perhaps, for the necessary defence of a barbarous people against the inroads and invasions of her neighboring nations, yet for the same purposes of tyranny, cruelty, and lust, which had dictated the canon law, it was soon adopted by almost all the princes of Europe, and wrought into the constitutions of their government. It was originally a code of laws for a vast army in a perpetual encampment. . . . In this manner the common people were held together in herds and clans in a state of servile dependence on their lords, bound even by the tenure of their lands, to follow them, whenever they commanded, to the wars, and in a state of total ignorance of every thing divine and human, excepting the use of arms and the culture of their lands.

But another event still more calamitous to human liberty, was a wicked confederacy between the two systems of tyranny above described. It seems to have been even stipulated between them, that the temporal grandees should contribute every thing in their power to maintain the ascendancy of the priesthood, and that the spiritual grandees in their turn, should employ their ascendancy over the consciousness of the people, in impressing on their minds a blind, implicit obedience to civil magistracy.¹

The Reformation, continues Adams, helped greatly to spread knowledge and thus to arouse rebellion in the hearts of the common people,

till at last, under the execrable race of the Stuarts, the struggle between the people and the confederacy aforesaid of temporal and spiritual tyranny, became formidable, violent, and bloody. It was this great struggle that peopled America. It was not religion alone, as is commonly supposed; but it was a love of universal liberty, and a hatred, a dread, a horror, of the infernal confederacy before described, that projected, conducted, and accomplished the settlement of America.²

Then he delivers a long but fairly restrained hymn to the Founding Fathers, concluding with the moral that the colonists must ever be on guard for their liberties. He urges all to publish their grievances. The English, he says, consider the Americans a stupid race because of the lack of protest on this side.

The true source of our sufferings has been our timidity. We have been afraid to think. We have felt a reluctance to examining into the grounds of our privileges, and the extent in which we have an indisputable right to demand them, against all the power of authority on earth.³

We have been too cautious and the Governors have taken advantage of our silence.

Let us banish for ever from our minds, my countrymen, all such unworthy ideas of the king, his ministry, & parliament. Let us

¹ The Life. Vol. IV. pp. 449-450.

² *Ibid.* p. 451.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 458-459.

not suppose that all are become luxurious, effeminate, and unreasonable, on the other side of the water, as many designing persons would insinuate. Let us presume, what is in fact true, that the spirit of Liberty is as ardent as ever among the body of the nation, though a few individuals may be corrupted. Let us take it for granted, that the same great spirit which once gave Caesar so warm a reception, which denounced hostilities against John till Magna Charta was signed, which severed the head of Charles the First from his body, and James the Second from his kingdom, the same great spirit (may heaven preserve it till the earth shall be no more) which first seated the great grandfather of his present most gracious majesty on the throne of Britain,—is still alive and active and warm in England; and that the same spirit in America, instead of provoking the inhabitants of that country, will endear us to them forever, and secure their goodwill.

This spirit, however, without knowledge, would be little better than a brutal rage. Let us tenderly and kindly cherish, therefore, the means of knowledge. Let us dare to read, think, speak, and write.¹

He urges the people to steep themselves in Greek and Roman history, to study the British constitution and English history, and to make themselves familiar with the laws of nature. Finally he calls upon the bar, the universities, and the pulpit to chant the praises of liberty.

Let the pulpit resound with the doctrines and sentiments of religious liberty. Let us hear the danger of thralldom to our consciences from ignorance, extreme poverty, and dependence, in short, from civil and political slavery. Let us see delineated before us the true map of man. Let us hear the dignity of his nature, and the noble rank he holds among the works of God,—that consenting to slavery is a sacrilegious breach of trust, as offensive in the sight of God as it is derogatory from our own honor or interest or happiness.²

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 461–462.

² *Ibid.* pp. 462–463.

The ideas of Locke, Pufendorf, Roger Williams and John Wise were plainly doing their work among the colonists. In John Adams they found a more powerful exponent¹ than in any of the Britishers, not excluding Burke. Adams is now chiefly remembered for his political career after the Revolution and for his celebrated letters to his amazing wife, the gentle but immensely well read and shrewd Abigail, but his actions and writings before 1776 deserve to be equally well known. Had he done nothing else but write "A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law" he would merit the everlasting thanks of posterity. It belongs in the same class with Roger Williams's "The Bloody Tenent yet More Bloody."

4. SAMUEL ADAMS

When a man abandons his business or job and complacently leaves the clothing of his children to wife or neighbors in order to drink flip and talk politics, ordinary folk are content to call him a lazy lout, ne'er-do-well, worthless fellow, or scamp. Samuel Adams was not a scamp. He might have been no more than a ne'er-do-well, perhaps, if cosmic forces had not opportunely provided him with an occupation which his contemporaries and posterity could regard as a high service to humanity. . . . Fate had so ordered the affairs of Samuel Adams that integrity of character required him to be an extraordinary man acting under extraordinary circumstances.²

These words by Dr. Carl Becker characterize Samuel Adams very well. He started out in life as a miserable failure, incompetent in business, shiftless in his personal affairs, and addicted to tavern life, but before he died Governor Hutchinson had plenty of ground to call him "the chief incendiary" of the Revolution, "the all in all," the "instar omnium," "the master of the puppets."³ He also called him the Cromwell of New England.⁴

¹ Katharine Lee Bates, in "American Literature," N. Y., 1898, p. 75, speaking of Adams's style, mentions his "constant ease and occasional power." The power was nearly as constant as the ease.

² "The Eve of the Revolution," by Carl Becker. New Haven. 1918. pp. 160-161.

³ Quoted in "Samuel Adams," by James K. Hosmer. Cambridge. 1900. p. 148. I am indebted to this book for most of my biographical material.

⁴ Quoted in *ibid.* p. 372.

Samuel Adams was born in Boston on September 27, 1722, the son of a well-to-do brewer. He obtained his A.B. from Harvard in 1740, and three years later won his A.M. from the same college. For a time he studied law, but he never practised it. He tried his hand for a while at merchanting, but failed. Then his father took him over as a partner in his brewing business. When the elder Adams died the son took the entire business into his hands—and in two years brought it into bankruptcy. How he lived and managed to support his family at the time is a mystery. Apparently he was engaged in no known gainful occupation. But he did like to gossip, especially about politics. He was interested in the subject even in his college days. His A.M. thesis at Harvard was entitled, "Whether it be Lawful to Resist the Supreme Magistrate, if the Commonwealth Cannot Otherwise be Preserved." Sometime in the late 50's he joined the Boston Caucus Club, "one of those semi-secret political machines which seem to be inseparable accompaniments of democratic governments. The purpose of this organization was to guide, or rather actually to control local elections, and to agree upon the matter to go into the warrant for the annual town meeting. . . . According to available accounts, the managers would assemble several weeks before town meeting, to nominate candidates for office and to decide what business the town would transact. . . . Nomination by the caucus was equivalent to election."¹ Through his membership in this club, the father of all the modern Tammanies, he got many soft jobs.

He served in office, large and small, on committees to see that chimneys are properly inspected, as fire-ward, to see that precautions are taken against the spread of the small pox, as moderator, on the committee to instruct the representatives to the assembly, as representative himself. From 1756 to 1764 he was annually elected one of the tax collectors, and in connection with this office came the gravest suspicion of a serious moral dereliction, which his enemies could ever lay to his charge. Embarrassments which weighed upon the people caused payments to be slow. The tax-collectors fell into arrears, and it was at length entered upon the records that they were indebted to the town in the sum of £9,878.²

¹ "Samuel Adams, Promoter of the American Revolution: A Study in Psychology and Politics," by Ralph Volney Harlow. N. Y. 1923. pp. 8-9.

² Hosmer. pp. 36-37.

Whether Adams was guilty of embezzlement it is difficult to determine now, for all the records are not to be had. Hosmer, his chief biographer, thinks that he was merely careless, and not corrupt.¹ The latest student of his life, Harlow, thinks likewise.² Anyway, Adams continued in office for many years thereafter, until 1769, in fact.

So far he had not done anything to distinguish him from many another good-natured Boston loafer. He was already graying in his early forties — a rapidly aging failure.

Life had brought to him much of hardship. In 1757 his wife had died, leaving to him a son, still another Samuel Adams, and a daughter. Misfortune had followed him in business. The malt-house had been an utter failure; his patrimony had vanished little by little, so that beyond the fair mansion in Purchase street, with its pleasant harbor view, little else remained to him; the house was becoming rusty through want of means to keep it in proper repair. In his public relations, fortune had thus far treated him no more kindly. As tax-collector he had quite failed and was largely in arrears. There was a possibility of losing what little property remained to him, and of having his name stained with dishonor.³

But in May, 1764, his hour came. In that month he was appointed on a committee to instruct the Boston representatives to the General Court. Adams wrote the instructions, and submitted them to the town meeting on May 24. It was a memorable document, "because it contains the first public denial of the right of the British Parliament to put in operation Grenville's scheme of the Stamp Act, just announced; and the first suggestion of a union of the Colonies for redress of grievance."⁴ It preceded Patrick Henry's celebrated "Virginia Resolutions" by precisely a year. With it Adams immediately sprang into

¹ Hosmer. p. 37.

² Harlow, p. 8, says, "There is no evidence at all that Adams was guilty of misuse of public money. The arrears named represented, not funds misappropriated, but merely taxes assigned to Adams for collection which he never took in."

³ Hosmer. pp. 46-47.

⁴ Hosmer. p. 47. Tyler, in the first volume of his excellent "Literary History of the American Revolution," pp. 60-61, says, regarding the political writings about the year 1764, "Though published weeks or even months after the official announcement of an intended Stamp Act, not one of them contains the slightest allusion to that measure; while, on the other hand, the actual passage, in April, 1764, of the act for deriving an imperial revenue from certain post-duties in the Colonies, appears to be the one fact over which the American people are united to take alarm." Tyler is unquestionably right. The reasons for the fact are still in the dark.

public prominence, and for the next ten years he kept up a barrage of articles and broadsides against Britain, the like of which, very probably, is not to be found in the annals of any other country in all history, past or present. Until the time of the first Continental Congress he was the real leader of the party of opposition in the Eastern Colonies.

A Loyalist writer, in 1775, called Adams "a sachem of vast elocution," adding bitterly that "what proceeds from [his] mouth . . . is sufficient to fill the mouths of millions in America."¹ Governor Hutchinson, who had plenty of reason to know whereof he talked, bore witness to Adams's deadly vituperation when he said that "long practice caused him to arrive at great perfection, and to acquire a talent of artfully and fallaciously insinuating into the minds of his readers a prejudice against the character of all whom he attacked, beyond any other man I ever knew."² Governor Bernard once exclaimed, "Damn that Adams! Every dip of his pen stings like a horned snake."³ In England, just before the outbreak of the Revolution, his reputation had become so great that, according to Josiah Quincy, many people there considered him "the first politician in the world."⁴ Among the common people in his midst he was looked upon as a sort of demigod. "In the stormiest days preceding the outbreak of the war, it was common among the vulgar and uneducated to assert that he was actually gifted with prophecy, and not a few believed that he held peace or war in his keeping."⁵

This American Bolshevik was a Puritan in religion, and extremely frugal and temperate in his habits. He seemed to have been truly contented with his poverty, and in his old age could say with all sincerity that "a guinea had never glistened in his eyes."⁶ Even his most bitter enemies could find nothing to censure in his mode of life.

¹ Quoted in "The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams: Being a Narrative of his Acts and Opinions, and of his Agency in Producing and Forwarding the American Revolution. With Extracts from his Correspondence, State Papers, and Political Essays," by William Vincent Wells. In 3 vols. Boston. 1865. Vol. II. p. 410 n.

² "The History of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay," by Thomas Hutchinson. London. 1828. In 3 vols. Vol. III. p. 295.

³ "The Works of John Adams . . .," edited by Charles Francis Adams. Boston. 1851. In 10 vols. Vol. II. pp. 425-426.

⁴ Quoted by Wells. Vol. II. p. 100.

⁵ Wells. Vol. II. p. 241.

⁶ *Ibid.* Vol. II. p. 272. Hosmer says, "He had an ear for music and a pleasant voice in singing, a practice which he much enjoyed. The house was strictly religious: grace was said at each meal, and the Bible is still preserved from which some member of the household read aloud each night." (p. 306)

Joseph Galloway, formerly Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly and a leader of the conciliation party, said that he was

a man who, though by no means remarkable for his brilliant abilities, yet is equal to most men in popular intrigue and the management of a faction. He eats little, drinks little, sleeps little, thinks much, and is most decisive and indefatigable in the pursuit of his objects. It was this man, who, by his superior application, managed at once the faction in Congress at Philadelphia and the factions in New England. Whatever these patriots in Congress wished to have done by their colleagues without, to induce General Gage, then at the head of his majesty's army at Boston, to give them a pretext for violent opposition, or to promote their measures in Congress, Mr. Adams advised and directed to be done; and when done, it was despatched by express to Congress. By one of the expresses came the inflammatory resolves of the county of Suffolk, which contained a complete declaration of war against Great Britain.¹

He used to work day and night, and apparently knew not what it meant to get tired.

Most of his public papers were written in a study or library adjoining his bedroom; and his [second] wife, after his death, related how in the stillness of the night, she used, in the Revolutionary times, to listen to the incessant motion of the pen in the next room, whence the solitary lamp, which lighted the patriot in his labors, was dimly visible. Mr. Joseph Pierce, who personally knew Samuel Adams, and whose business obliged him for a long time to pass after midnight by the house, related, early in the present century, that he seldom failed to see the study lighted, no matter how far the night was gone, "and he knew Sam Adams was hard at work writing against the Tories."²

The long line of state papers that Adams wrote includes some of the most important documents of the Revolution. It was he who drafted the instructions of the town of Boston, in both 1764 and

¹ "Historical and Political Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Revolution," by Joseph Galloway. London. 1780. p. 67.

² Wells. Vol. I. pp. 202-203.

1765, to its representatives in the General Court. It was he who, in October, 1775, wrote the assembly's answer to the Governor's speech. In 1769 he wrote the remonstrance of the House of Representatives to the Governor, and the celebrated "Appeal to the World," sent forth by the town meeting of Boston. Five years later he composed the even more famous circular letter of the town of Boston and of its nearest neighbors to the committees of correspondence throughout the Colonies. The next year he wrote the address of the Continental Congress to the Mohawk Indians, and in 1776 the resolves of Congress for the disarmament of the Tories. He had a great deal to do with the composition of the constitution of the State of Massachusetts, in 1779, particularly the Bill of Rights. From 1765 to 1774 he was a member, and after 1776 he was clerk, of the General Court of Massachusetts. He probably inspired the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773. No wonder the British tried to capture him!

From 1774 to 1782 (excepting 1779) he was a member of the Continental Congress. During the Revolution he was Secretary of State for Massachusetts, and in 1782 was president of the State Senate. Strangely enough, he was not on the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence, but he was a member of the committee to prepare a plan of confederation. He was a signer of the Articles of Confederation and of the Declaration. At first he was against the Federal Constitution as drafted in Philadelphia in 1787, but later on he worked for its ratification — after the Bill of Rights was agreed upon.

He was strongly against conferring too much power in the Federal government. His ideal state was one made up of a multiplicity of town meetings, with the smallest amount of authority possible vested in the communal governmental body. He never trusted representatives too far removed from the people they represented. After the Revolution he lost considerably in prestige. Jefferson, Washington and Hamilton, all far abler men than he, came into power. He lived on for sixteen more years, dying in 1803. The highest office he ever held was that of Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts.

His most valuable state papers are the State letter to De Berdt, the Massachusetts business representative in London, January 12, 1768; the Massachusetts petition to the King, January 20, 1768; the circular letter throughout the Colonies, February 11, 1768; and the letter to Hillsborough, another Massachusetts business agent in

London, June 30, 1768.¹ The most famous of them all is the circular letter of February 11, 1768. It shows Adams at his best as a writer of state documents. It follows in full:

The House of Representatives of this Province have taken into their serious Consideration, the great difficultys that must accrue to themselves & their Constituents, by the operation of several acts of Parliament imposing Duties & Taxes on the American Colonys.

As it is a Subject in which every Colony is deeply interested they have no reason to doubt but your assembly is deeply impressed with its Importance & that such constitutional measures will be come into as are proper. It seems to be necessary, that all possible Care should be taken, that the Representations of the several Assembly upon so delicate a point, should harmonize with each other: The House therefore hope that this letter be candidly considered in no other Light, than as expressing a Disposition freely to communicate their mind to a Sister Colony, upon a common Concern in the same manner as they would be glad to receive the Sentiments of your or any other House of Assembly on the Continent.

The House have humbly represented to the ministry, their own Sentiments that His Majestys high Court of Parliament is the Supreme legislative Power over the whole Empire: That in all free States the constitution is fixd; & as the supreme Legislative derives its Power & Authority from the Constitution, it cannot overleap the Bounds of it without destroying its own foundation: That the Constitution ascertains & limits both Sovereignty & allegiance, & therefore, his Majestys American Subjects, who acknowledge themselves bound by the Ties of Allegiance, have an equitable Claim to the full enjoym^t of the fundamental Rules of the British Constitution. That is an essential unalterable Right in nature, ingrafted into the British Constitution, as a fundamental Law & ever held sacred & irrevocable by the Subjects within the Realm, that what a man has honestly acquired is absolutely his own, which he may freely give, but cannot be taken from him without his consent: That the American Subjects may therefore exclusive of any Consideration of Charter Rights, with

¹ All of them are to be found in Vol. I of "The Writings of Samuel Adams," collected and edited by Harry Alonzo Cushing. N. Y. 1904.

a decent firmness adapted to the Character of free men & Subjects assert this natural and constitutional Right.

It is moreover their humble opinion, which they express with greatest Deference to the Wisdom of the Parliament that the Acts made there imposing Duties on the People of this province with the sole & express purpose of raising a Revenue, are Infringements of their natural & constitutional Rights because as they are not represented in the British Parliam^t His Majestys Commons in Britain by those Acts grant their Property without their consent.

This House further are of the Opinion that their Constituents considering their local Circumstances cannot by any possibility be represented in the Parliament, & that it will forever be impracticable that they should be equally represented there & consequently not at all; being separated by an Ocean of a thousand leagues: and that his Majestys Royal Predecessors for this reason were graciously pleas'd to form a Subordinate Legislature here that their subjects might enjoy the unalienable Right of a Representation. Also that considering the utter Impracticability of their ever being fully & equally represented in parliam^t, & the great Expence that must unavoidably attend even a partial representation there, this House think that a taxation of their Constituents, even without their Consent, grievous as it is, would be preferable to any Representation that could be admitted for them there . . .

They have also submitted to Consideration whether any People can be said to enjoy any degree of Freedom, if the Crown in addition to its undoubted Authority of constituting a Gov^r, should also appoint him such a Stipend as it may judge proper without the Consent of the people & at their Expence; and whether while the Judges of the Land & other Civil officers hold not their Commission during good Behavior, their having salaries appointed for them by the Crown independent of the people, hath not a tendency to subvert the principles of Equity & endanger the Happiness & Security of the Subject.¹

On March 18, 1769, the third anniversary of the repeal of the Stamp Act, Adams wrote a powerful appeal to the Sons of Liberty,

¹ Cushing edition. Vol. I. pp. 184-187.

a quasi-secret political organization, which was founded in Boston in January, 1766, and later sprouted branches in all the other Colonies.¹ The Providence, R. I., branch posted the appeal on the Liberty Tree in its town. In the last paragraph is Adams's first hint that complete independence is the only solution for the problems that beset the Colonies.

When I consider the corruption of Great Britain—their load of debt,—their intestine divisions, tumults, and riots,—their scarcity of provisions,—and the Contempt in which they are held by the nations about them: and when I consider, on the other hand, the State of the American Colonies with Regard to the various Climates, Soils, Produce, rapid Population, joined to the virtue of the Inhabitants,—I cannot but think that the Conduct of Old England towards us may be permitted by Divine Wisdom, and ordained by the unsearchable providence of the Almighty, for hastening a period dreadful to Great Britain.

A SON OF LIBERTY.²

Many as were the state and club documents that Adams composed, the articles that he wrote for the newspapers were infinitely more numerous. His chief organs were the Boston *Public Advertiser*, the *Gazette*, and the *Evening Post*. He was also in great demand by the radical papers in other Colonies. As Tyler says, "He had the instinct of a great journalist, and of a great journalist willing to screen his individuality behind his journal. In this service, it was not Samuel Adams that Samuel Adams cared to put before the public—it was the ideas of Samuel Adams. Accordingly, of all American writers for newspapers between the years 1754 and 1776, he was perhaps the most vigilant, the most industrious, the most effective, and also the least identified."³ Therefore he seldom published anything under his own name, but under a number of pen-names, which no one has yet been able to number. There were at least twenty-five of them. Among them were "Determinatus," "Candidus," "Vindex," "T.Z.," "Shippen," "E. A.," "A Layman," "A Bostonian," "A Tory," "Populus," "An Impartialist," "Alfred," "A Chatterer," "A Son of Lib-

¹ There is a good description of the activities of the Sons of Liberty in Harlow, p. 79 ff. Adams, as was to be expected, was among the founders.

² Quoted by Cushing. Vol. I. p. 134.

³ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 8.

erty," "Valerius Poplicola," "Sincerus," "Cedant Arma Togæ," "Principiis Obsta," "A Religious Politician," and "Observation."

Some of his essays over one signature extend, in consecutive series, through several years,—the argument being maintained right and left with his various Loyalist assailants,—while, with different names, he kept up contests simultaneously with others of the crown writers on distinct subjects.¹

He was the pamphleteer *par excellence*, perhaps the greatest America has yet produced. He was always simple, clear and immensely effective. There was very little rhetoric in him. He was as stern and frugal in his writing as in his living. His basic rule of warfare was "Keep your enemy in the wrong."² But he was very careful with his facts. He seldom overstated and never recanted. Living in a century that was preposterously fond of Latin and Greek allusions, he frequently brought up Cicero and Virgil and the other writers of classical antiquity, but he did it with moderation. The way of the two Mathers, in this respect, was not his. His classical references were instantly intelligible to the fairly well-read layman. Needless to say, his reverent and careful reading of the English Bible made itself felt in practically all he wrote. The authors to whom he most referred were Hume, Locke, Sidney, Blackstone, Hooker, Coke, Grotius, Montesquieu, and Vattel.

The following is a good example of his pamphleteering style. It appeared in the *Boston Gazette*, the chief radical paper in Massachusetts,³ for October 2, 1769. It is signed "Alfred."

The Colonies are more than ever united in a determined effort to these acts, and I hope in God they will continue their opposition to them, till they are all repealed—'till the Locust and the Caterpillars which now swarm among us, are driven off like chaff, and every American grievance is redressed.—Their union & firmness I am sure will continue as long as they have a feeling of their own dignity and their rights; and there is no reason to fear that this feeling will ever be extinguished in their breasts, while they remain a virtuous and sensible people. Their

¹ Wells. Vol. I. p. 445 n.

² Quoted *ibid.* Vol. I. p. 447.

³ The chief administration organ in the State was the *Massachusetts Gazette*. It was sometimes called *Draper's Gazette* and the *Court Gazette*.

opposition has been prudent & legal, — what single step has been taken that cannot fully be justify'd by the Laws of their country — They have publickly remonstrated their grievances to the world, and humbly petition'd their Sovereign for redress: . . . Let any one imagine the distress of this people — a free city, I mean once free and still entitled to its freedom, reduc'd to the worst of tyranny — an aggravated tyranny! Was not an army of placemen and pensioners sufficient, who would eat us up as they eat bread, but an array of soldiers must be stationed in our very bowels — Where is the bill of rights, magna charta and the blood of our venerable forefathers! In this dilemma to what a dreadful alternative were we reduc'd! *To resist this tyranny*, or, *submit to chains* — The one might have been done with the greatest ease, for what was an handful of troops to subdue a large country — surely two or three regiments could never have been intended to “extirpate the inhabitants of this province.” And it could not be expected that such a petty armament could produce any other effect than that of “inspiring the people with resentment” — “those who imagined that the inhabitants of Boston would oppose the landing of the King's troops knew very little of their temper or design,” and yet I believe the thought of finally submitting to chains was never suffer'd to harbour in their hearts — God forbid that free countries should ever again yield to tyranny! This has long been the unhappy fate of the world, while it was overspread with ignorance and envelop'd in darkness: Mankind I hope are now become too enlightened to suffer it much longer. . . . Good God! How much longer is it expected that the patience of this injured country shall hold out! Have we not already been sufficiently provok'd?¹

Like all the other Puritans of his day Adams never missed a chance to take a crack at Catholicism. In 1768 he wrote a whole series of articles for the *Boston Gazette*, denouncing the Roman Harlot. In the issue for April 4, under the signature of “A Puritan,” he let loose this blast:

The more I know of the circumstances of America, I am sorry to say it, the more reason I find to be apprehensive of POPERY. Bless

¹ Cushing edition. Vol. I. pp. 391-395.

me! could our ancestors look out of their graves and see so many of *their own* sons, deck'd with the most *foreign* Superfluities, the ornaments of the *whore of Babylon*, how would it break their sacred Repose! But amidst my gloomy apprehensions, it is a consolation to me to observe, that some of our Towns, maintain their integrity, and show a laudable zeal against POPERY.¹

A week later, writing in the same newspaper and under the same signature, he goes even further in his denunciation of the "scourge."

I did verily believe, and I do still, that much more is to be dreaded from the growth of POPERY in America, than from Stamp-Acts or *any other* Acts destructive of mens civil rights: Nay, I could not help fancying that the Stamp-Act itself was contrived with a design only to inure the people to the habit of contemplating themselves as the slaves of men; and the transition from thence to a subjection to Satan, is mighty easy.²

His cousin, John Adams, once said of Samuel Adams that he was "the most elegant writer" in Revolutionary America.³ And James Otis once remarked of a state paper of his that "there was not a person in England capable of composing so elegant, so pure, and so nervous a writing."⁴ Both of these judgments went too far. There was little elegance in Adams' style, and not much "purity." But there was tremendous effectiveness. If any single man caused the Revolution he was the one. In 1825 Jefferson said: "If there was any Palinurus to the Revolution, Samuel Adams was the man. Indeed, in the Eastern States, for a year or two after it began, he was truly the man of the Revolution."⁵ John Fiske's opinion of him is well-known. He said he was "second only to Washington." Important as he was in the history of the Republic it is strange that no truly satisfactory biography of him has yet been written. The Wells study is the best in print, but it does not take sufficiently into account Adams's indebtedness to English political theory, nor to the political thinking that went on in the Colonies for a hundred years before he was born. The writings of

¹ *Ibid.* Vol. I. pp. 202-203.

² *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 203.

³ *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 446.

⁴ "Letters to the Ministry from Governor Bernard." Boston. 1769. p. 40. The state paper referred to is the petition to the King, January 20, 1768.

⁵ Quoted by Hosmer. p. 365.

Hooker, Shepard and John Wise undoubtedly had a great influence on him, but Wells gives them little attention. Hosmer's biography is based on Wells's, but his critical judgments are far more judicious than his.

The most comprehensive study yet made of Samuel Adams's place in the history of American political thinking is Chapter IV in the first volume of Parrington's "Main Currents in American Thought." "The work of Samuel Adams," he says, "was largely done before the word *democrat* was given vogue by the French Revolution, and he cautiously refrained from using it; nevertheless, he was probably the most thoroughgoing democrat of his generation of Americans. He was wholly persuaded that the sovereign people have a right to change their fundamental law, together with the interpretation of it, whenever they desire; and that pending such change it was well to nullify an act of prerogative subversive of their interests."¹ Parrington might have added that he was also the only prominent man of his day who was in favor of independence from first to last. In this he never wavered. And toward this end he directed all his energies. Logically, "he rested his case on an appeal to the rights of man, to the particular rights and privileges of the British subject under the Constitution, and to the express terms of the compact between the crown and its emigrant subjects laid down in the general colonial charters."²

But his chief strength as a propagandist lay not so much in his logic, as in his shrewd political sense. He knew his public and he knew how to sway it. "It was . . . as a manager of men that Samuel Adams was greatest. Such a master of the methods by which a town-meeting may be swayed the world has never seen. On the best of terms with the people, the ship-yard men, the distillers, the sailors, as well as the merchants and ministers, he knew precisely what springs to touch. He was the prince of canvassers, the very king of the caucus."³ The first principle of public argumentation, repetition, he knew thoroughly. On one occasion, when he was away in attendance on the Continental Congress, he reproached his friends back home for neglecting the work of publicity:

Your presses have been too long silent. What were your Committees of Correspondence about? I hear nothing of circular

¹ "Main Currents in American Thought," by Vernon Louis Parrington. 2 vols. N. Y. 1927. Vol. I. p. 245.

² *Ibid.* p. 237.

³ Hosmer. p. 363.

Letters—of joynt Committees &c. Such Methods have in times past raised the Spirits of the People—drawn off their Attention from picking up Pins, & directed their Views to great objects.¹

Samuel Adams lived in an age of great political writers and masters of public persuasion. Those were the days of Burke, Montesquieu, "Junius," Rousseau, Voltaire, Dickinson, Franklin and Paine. He compared very favorably with the best of them, and was far better than most. As Hosmer says of his writings,

If there is never the magnificence of Burke, there is an absence, too, of all turgid and labored rhetoric. If there is a lack of Franklin's pith and wit, there is a lack, too, of Poor Richard's penny wisdom. If we miss the tremendous invective of "Junius," we find instead of acrid cruelty the spirit of humanity.²

He appealed to the mob, to be sure, but there was a fine dignity about the way he did it. His was not an original mind, but neither was Jefferson's or Washington's or Franklin's. But it was marvelously receptive to ideas, and of unimpeachable integrity. If there is a Valhalla of political agitators he is surely among its chief glories.

5. JOSIAH QUINCY, JR.

The neglect which has befallen the memory of Josiah Quincy, Jr., is something of a puzzle. Nearly all the literary historians pass him over completely, and the general historians follow suit. Neither Trent nor Parrington nor the Beards think him of sufficient importance even to mention his name in passing. Such neglect is difficult to understand. Quincy was surely not one of the great captains of the Revolution, but he was unquestionably one of its ablest first lieutenants. He had courage, he had tremendous industry, and he had shrewd understanding. He grasped the full meaning of the struggle between the Colonies and the mother country immediately, and he wrote about it eloquently and out of a fund of full and precise information. Mr. Richardson has justly said: "The words of Quincy seem to modern readers more intense and more artlessly artistic than those of Otis.

¹ Wells. Vol. III. p. 289.

² Hosmer. pp. 360-361.

. . . Without such counsel and such determination the Revolution must have been a failure."¹

Quincy was born in Boston on February 23, 1744.² He was graduated from Harvard at the age of nineteen. He read law with Oxenbridge Thacher, and soon rose to a high rank in his profession. He denounced the Stamp Act through the press and at public meetings. He risked his reputation and even his life when, together with John Adams, he defended the British soldiers implicated in the Boston Massacre in 1770. He wrote a great deal for the *Boston Gazette* and *Edes and Gill's Gazette*, also published in Boston. He almost never signed his name to his newspaper contributions, but employed pseudonyms. Among the latter were "Mentor," "Hyperion," "An Independent," "An Old Man," "Callisthenes," "Tertius in nubilis," "Edward Sexby," and "Marchmont Nedham." In 1770-1772 he drafted the instructions of the town of Boston to its representatives in the General Court. In 1773 he was stricken with tuberculosis, and was forced to go to South Carolina for his health. He took advantage of the trip to arrange a system of communication between the Northern Colonies and the Southern and Middle ones. In May, 1774, appeared his most celebrated work, "Observations on the Act of Parliament Commonly Called The Boston Port-Bill; with Thoughts on Civil Society and Standing Armies." In September of the same year he went to England, where he won the friendship of Barré, the Earl of Shelburne, Priestly, and others. He sailed for home the following Spring, but died on the voyage, on April 26.

Immediately after the Stamp Act went into effect he wrote two excellent pieces for the *Boston Gazette*, printed in the issues for September 28 and October 5, 1767. He signed both "Hyperion." Boston at the time was in a turmoil. The merchants were panicky, and the lawyers of both sides bandied magniloquent oratory. In the midst of it all Quincy, then only twenty-three, wrote two vigorous appeals to his fellow countrymen. On September 28 he said:

Be not deceived, my countrymen. Believe not these venal hirelings when they would cajole you by their subtleties into submis-

¹ "American Literature, 1607-1885," by Charles F. Richardson. Vol. I. pp. 186-187.

² For the biographical information here I rely mainly on "Mémoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Jun., of Massachusetts," by his son, Josiah Quincy. Boston. 1874. Second edition, edited by Eliza Susan Quincy. The first edition was published in 1825. I shall refer to this book as *The Mémoir* in the remainder of this section. It is the most authoritative biography in print.

sion, or frighten you by their vaporings into compliance. [All the high officers of state were arguing that the Stamp Act was just.] When they strive to flatter you by the terms "moderation and prudence," tell them, that calmness and deliberation are to guide your judgment; courage and intrepidity command the action. When they endeavor to make us "perceive our inability to oppose our mother country," let us boldly answer: In defence of our civil and religious rights, we dare oppose the world; with the God of armies on our side, even the God who fought our fathers' battles, we fear not the hour of trial, though the hosts of our enemies should cover the field like locusts. If this be enthusiasm, we will live and die enthusiasts.

Blandishments will not fascinate us, nor will threats of a "halter" intimidate. For under God, we are determined, that wheresoever, whensoever, or howsoever, we shall be called to make our exit, we will die freemen. Well do we know that all the regalia of this world cannot dignify the death of a villain, nor diminish the ignominy, with which a slave shall quit his existence. Neither can it taint the unblemished honour of a son of freedom, though he should mark his departure on the already prepared gibbet, or be dragged to the newly erected scaffold for execution. With the plaudits of his conscience he will go off the stage. A crown of joy and immortality shall be his reward. The history of his life his children shall venerate. The virtues of their sire shall excite their emulation.

Surely not a bad beginning for a twenty-three year old revolutionary! Certainly it is at least as good as Otis ever wrote. But Quincy did even better in the eight years that remained to his lamentably short life. Early in the Fall of 1768 two British regiments came down upon Boston and immediately set to searching every home and person for unstamped goods and seditious literature. They even went through the belongings of the representatives of the people in the General Court. The *Gazette* was full of fiery protests, but the best of the lot was Quincy's. It appeared in the issue for October 3 of that year, and was signed "Hyperion." Some of its most eloquent paragraphs follow:

Now is the time for this people to summon every aid, human and divine; to exhibit every moral virtue, and call forth every

Christian grace. The wisdom of the serpent, the innocence of the dove, and the intrepidity of the lion, with the blessing of God, will yet save us from the jaws of destruction.

Where is the boasted liberty of Englishmen, if property may be disposed of, charters suspended, assemblies dissolved, and every valued right annihilated, at the uncontrollable will of an external power. Does not every man, who feels an ethereal spark yet glowing in his bosom, find his indignation kindle, at the bare imagination of such wrongs? What would be our sentiments, were this imagination realized? . . .

Who has the front to ask, Wherefore do you complain? Who dares assert, everything worth living for is not lost, when a nation is enslaved? Are not pensioners, stipendiaries, and salary men, (unknown before,) hourly multiplying on us, to riot in the spoils of miserable America? Does not every Eastern gale waft us some new insect, even of that devouring kind, which eat up every green thing. Is not the bread taken out of the children's mouths and given unto dogs? Are not our estates given to corrupt sycophants, without a design or even a pretence of soliciting our assent, and our lives put into the hands of those whose tender mercies are cruelties? Has not an authority in a distant land, in the most public manner, proclaimed a right of disposing of *the all* of Americans? In short, what have we to lose—what have we to fear? Are not our distresses more than we can bear; and to finish all, are not our cities, in a time of profound peace, filled with standing armies, to preclude us from that last solace of the wretched—to open their mouths in complaint, and send forth their cries in bitterness of heart? . . .

By the sweat of our brow, we earn the little we possess; from nature we derive the common rights of man;—and by charter we claim the liberty of Britons! Shall we, —dare we, —pusillanimously surrender our birthright? Is the obligation to our fathers discharged, is the debt we owe posterity paid? Answer me, thou coward! who hidest thyself in the hour of trial! If there is no reward in this life, no prize of glory in the next, capable of animating thy dastard soul; think and tremble, thou miscreant! at the whips and stripes thy master shall lash thee with on earth, —and the flames and scorpions, thy second master shall torment thee with hereafter!

Oh, my countrymen! What will our children say, when they

read the history of these times, should they find we tamely gave away, without one noble struggle, the most invaluable of earthly blessings? As they drag the galling chain, will they not execrate us? If we have any respect for things sacred; any regard to the dearest treasure on earth;—if we have one tender sentiment for posterity; if we would not be despised by the whole world;—let us, in the most open, solemn manner, and with determined fortitude swear,—we will die,—if we cannot live freemen!

Be not lulled, my countrymen, with vain imaginations, or idle fancies. To hope for the protection of Heaven, without doing our duty, and exerting ourselves as becomes men, is to mock the Deity. Wherefore had man his reason, if it were not to direct him? Wherefore his strength, if it be not his protection? To banish folly and luxury, correct vice and immorality, and stand immovable in the freedom, in which we are free indeed, is eminently the duty of each individual, at this day. When this is done, we may rationally hope for an answer to our prayers; for the whole counsel of God, and the invincible armour of the Almighty.

However righteous our cause, we cannot, in this period of the world, expect a miraculous salvation. Heaven will undoubtedly assist us, if we are like men; but to expect protection from above, while we are enervated by luxury, and slothful in the exertion of those abilities with which we are endued, is an expectation vain and foolish. With the smiles of Heaven, virtue, unanimity, and firmness will insure success. While we have equity, justice, and God, on our side, Tyranny, spiritual or temporal, shall never ride triumphant in a land inhabited by Englishmen.

The essay of Quincy's which produced the greatest commotion of all was "Observations on the Act of Parliament Commonly Called The Boston Port-Bill; with Thoughts on Civil Society and Standing Armies." It was published in 1774, immediately after the passage of the so-called Boston Port-Bill, which closed the port of Boston to the landing and discharging of goods of all sorts. Quincy had at it with all his might, and his pamphlet against it is perhaps his chief monument. Compared to his contributions to the *Gazette* it is a calm and judicious work, but it is by no means devoid of fire, and it contains one of the most terrific denunciations of the military ever written by an American—at least in the first two hundred years of the history of the United States. A few excerpts from it follow:

Regular government is necessary to the preservation of private property and personal security. Without these, men will descend into barbarism, or at least become adepts in humiliation and servility; but they will never make a progress in literature or the useful arts. Surely a proficiency in arts and sciences is of some value to mankind, and deserves some consideration. What regular government can America enjoy with a legislative a thousand leagues distant, unacquainted with her exigencies, militant in interest, and unfeeling of her calamities? What protection of property, when ministers under this authority shall overrun the land with mercenary legions? What personal safety, when a British administration (such as it now is, and corrupt as it may be) pour armies into the capital and senate-house, point their artillery against the tribunal of justice, and plant weapons of death at the posts of our doors? . . .

Amidst all the devices of man to the prejudice of his species, the institution of which we treat hath proved the most extensively fatal to religion, morals, and social happiness. Founded in the most malevolent dispositions of the human breast, disguised by the policy of state, supported by the lusts of ambition, the sword hath spread havoc and misery throughout the world. By the aid of mercenary troops, the sinews of war, the property of the subject, the life of the Commonwealth, have been committed to the hands of hirelings, whose interest and very existence depend on an abuse of their power. In the lower class of life, standing armies have introduced brutal debauchery and real cowardice: in the higher orders of state, venal haughtiness and extravagant dissipation. In short, whatever are the concomitants of despotism, whatever the appendages of oppression, this armed monster hath spawned or nurtured, protected or established, — monuments and scourges of the folly and turpitude of man. . . .

Booty and blind submission is the science of the camp. When lust, rapacity, or resentment incites, whole battalions proceed to outrage. Do their leaders command, obedience must follow. "Private soldiers," said Tiberius Gracchus, from the Roman rostrum, — "fight and die to advance the wealth and luxury of the great." "Soldiers," said an eminent Puritan, in his sermon preached in this country more than a hundred and thirty years ago, "are commonly men who fight themselves, fearlessly into the

mouth of hell for revenge, or booty, or a little revenue:—a day of battle is a day of harvest for the devil." Soldiers, like men, are much the same in every age and country . . .

What will they not fight for, whom will they not fight against? Are these men, who take up arms with a view to defend their country and its laws? Do the ideas or the feelings of the citizen actuate a British private on entering the camp? Excitements generous and noble like these are far from being the stimuli of a modern phalanx. The general of an army, habituated to uncontrolled command, feels himself absolute; he forgets his superiors, or rather despises that civil authority which is destitute of an energy to compel his obedience. His soldiers (who look up to him as their sovereign, and to their officers as magistrates) lose the sentiments of the citizen, and condemn the laws. Thus will and a power to tyrannize become united; and the effects are as inevitable and fatal in the political as the moral world.

Plainly, this is good writing. It stands up very well beside the similar attempts by Otis, John Adams and Samuel Adams. It hasn't the learning of the first's "Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law," nor the vehemence of the second's celebrated series of anti-Catholic articles in the *Boston Gazette* in 1768. But there is more grace of style in it, and a somewhat firmer hand in the marshaling of the immediate facts. Quincy was a first-rate pamphleteer, not so effective perhaps as Sam Adams, but very close to him. They were both rabble-rousers, but with what pertinacity, with what majestic carelessness of personal welfare—and often also of logic and of facts—they did their job!

6. MINOR POLITICAL WRITERS

JOHN HANCOCK—JOSEPH WARREN—THE MECHANICS

a. JOHN HANCOCK

Governor Hutchinson said that John Hancock's "ruling passion was a fondness for popular applause. . . . His natural powers were moderate, and had been very little improved by study."¹ John Mein,

¹ "The History of Massachusetts," by Thomas Hutchinson. 3 vols. Boston and London. 1764-1767-1828. Volumes I and II appeared in special editions in Boston in 1795. Vol. III. p. 399.

a printer and stationer and founder of the *Boston Chronicle*, entertained a similar view of him. He once described him as "Johnny Dupe, Esq. alias the Milch-Cow of the 'Well Disposed' . . . A good natured young man with long ears—a silly conceited grin on his countenance—a fool's cap on his head—a bandage tied over his eye—richly dressed and surrounded with a crowd of people, some of whom are stroking his ears, others tickling his nose with straws, while the rest are employed in riffling his pockets."¹ But John Adams thought otherwise of this "Johnny Dupe." He considered him worthy to be numbered among the five New Englanders who were "most conspicuous, most ardent and influential" in fostering revolutionary sentiment among the Northern Colonies.²

Both Hutchinson and John Adams went too far, but the truth probably was more with Adams. Hancock was vain, haughty, not very learned, and somewhat erratic in his loyalty to the cause of independence. But the circumstances of his life were such that the few blows he delivered against Great Britain heartened the people considerably. Once war was decided upon he did not waver. He was a President of the Continental Congress, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the first Governor of Massachusetts.

He was born in Braintree, Mass., on January 23, 1737, and was graduated from Harvard at the age of seventeen.³ He was adopted by a rich uncle, Thomas Hancock, who in 1764 left him a fortune of more than £70,000, and to whose large mercantile business he succeeded. Young John had no head for business, and more than once nearly lost his entire inheritance. As a young man he traveled in England for a time. He was on the board of selectmen of Boston for a number of years, and after 1766 was repeatedly elected to the Massachusetts General Court. He was a member of the legislative com-

¹ "A State of the Importations from Great Britain into the Port of Boston from the beginning of Jan. 1769 to Aug. 17, 1769," by John Mein. Boston. 1769. p. 27. The occasion for Mein's outburst against Hancock was his discovery that Hancock did not live up to the agreement he signed early in 1769 with other merchants of Boston not to import anything from Great Britain.

² "The Complete Works of John Adams . . .," edited by C. F. Adams. Boston. 1850-1856. 10 vols. Vol. X. p. 284.

³ There is no adequate biography of Hancock. The facts of his life I have gathered from several sources, notably the following: "Historical Notes of the American Colonies and Revolution. From 1754-1775," by William Griffith. Burlington, N. J. 1843; "The History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America: Including an Account of the Late War, and of the Thirteen Colonies, From their Origin to that Period," by William Gordon. 3 vols. Third American edition. N. Y. 1801; and "The Beginnings of the American Revolution. Based on Contemporary Letters, Diaries, and Other Documents," by Ellen Chase. 3 vols. N. Y. 1910. Of the three books the Chase is the best. It is more ably written, and has more material.

mittee that asked Governor Hutchinson to remove the British troops from Boston, and on the fourth anniversary of the Boston Massacre he delivered the commemorative oration that at once made him a marked man. In June, 1774, he was appointed by the General Court to be one of the Massachusetts delegates to the First Continental Congress, and in October of the same year he was appointed chairman of the First Provincial Congress of Massachusetts. Later he was made president, which position he also held in the Second Provincial Congress. Colonial Governor Gage of Massachusetts had put a price on his head—as well as on that of Sam Adams—both of whom he expressly excepted from his proclamation of pardon, June 12, 1775. The offenses of both of these scoundrels, he said, “are of too flagitious a nature to admit of any other consideration than that of condign punishment.”

Hancock was elected President of the Continental Congress in May, 1775, partly in order to win over the wealthy to the cause of independence. He served off and on in the Congress till 1786. In 1778, as major-general of the Massachusetts militia, he commanded the State troops in the Rhode Island expedition. Two years later he was a member of the Constitutional Convention of Massachusetts. He was elected the first Governor of the State, and reëlected annually until 1785. In 1787 he was again Governor. He remained in office until his death in 1793.

The Fall of 1766 was a most anxious one in Massachusetts. The Stamp Act was about to go into effect, and the merchants were beside themselves what to do about it. How gravely they looked upon their situation was well set forth by John Hancock on October 14 of that year. On that date he wrote the following letter to his London agents, Barnards & Harrison:

The Ruin of this people must be the Consequence of this Act's Taking place. Our Trade here will entirely Stagnate, for it is the united Resolution & Determination of the people here not to Carry on Business under a Stamp, we shall be in the utmost Confusion here after the 1st Novr. & nothing but the Repeal of the Act can retrieve our Trade again. Persons who have Vessels here may now Clear them before the 1st Novr. but those that may arrive after, must lay up till the Resolutions of Parliamt. be known, If not Repeal'd you may bid Adieu to Remittances for the past Goods, and trade in future, your Debts cannot be Recover'd

here, for we shall have no Courts of Justice after the 1st Novr. & I now tell you, & you will find it come to pass that the people of this Country will never suffer themselves to be made slaves of by a Submission to that D——d act. . . . I have come to a Serious Resolution not to send one Ship more to the Sea nor to have any kind of Connection in Business under a Stamp. . . . We are a people worth saving. . . . I now tell you the whole Continent is so Rous'd that they will never suffer any one to Distribute the Stamp,—a Thousand Guineas, nay a much Larger Sum, would be no Temptation to me to be the first that should apply for a Stamp.¹

A week later he wrote again to his London agents to the same effect.² As time went on he became more and more outspoken in his hostility toward the mother country, and when March 5, 1771, came around, he went the whole way, and urged rebellion. On that day, the first anniversary of the Boston Massacre, a commemorative meeting was held in the Old South Church. John Hancock was one of the speakers. He said:

Permit me to suggest a general congress of deputies, from the several houses of assembly on the Continent, as the most effectual method of establishing . . . a union, . . . for the security of our rights and liberties. . . . Remember from whom you sprang. . . . Not only pray, but act; . . . if necessary fight, and even die for the prosperity of our Jerusalem. . . . I have the most animating confidence that the present noble struggle for liberty, will terminate gloriously for America. And let us play the man for our God, and the cities of our God; while we are using the means in our power, let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the Universe, who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. And having secured the approbation of our hearts, by a faithful and unwearied discharge of our duty to our country, let us joyfully leave our concerns in the hands of Him who raiseth up and putteth down the empires and kingdoms of the world as He pleases.³

¹ "John Hancock: His Book," by Abram English Brown. Boston. 1898. pp. 86-88.

² *Ibid.* pp. 89-90.

³ The address is quoted in full in "Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America . . .," by Hezekiah Niles. N. Y. 1876. p. 40 ff.

When London heard of this speech it ordered Hancock to be hanged on capture. He was never caught, and died in bed at the age of fifty-six, mourned by all the Thirteen Colonies. He was not a Samuel Adams, nor a Josiah Quincy, nor even a James Otis, but he was extremely valuable to them, and therein lay his real service to the cause of the Revolution. Though of "very mediocre talents,"¹ he was one of the few "solid citizens" of Boston who backed the rebels.

b. JOSEPH WARREN

Dr. Joseph Warren is chiefly remembered today for his celebrated "Suffolk Resolves," one of the most powerful state papers of the Revolutionary Era. He wrote practically nothing else. The Boston of his day was very fond of him, and with good reason. He was born in Roxbury, Mass., in 1741, and was graduated from Harvard in 1759.² He studied medicine, and became a successful physician in Boston. He was a godsend to the town during the smallpox epidemic of 1764. He was one of the first American physicians to use inoculation against smallpox on a large scale. In 1772 and 1775 he delivered the anniversary orations in commemoration of the Boston Massacre. He was an active member of the First Committee of Correspondence of Boston, assembled in 1772. In 1775 he drafted the "Suffolk Resolves," in which he called upon the colonists to use force if necessary in resisting the aggressions of Great Britain. He was a member of the First, Second, and Third Provincial Congresses of Massachusetts, presiding over the third. On April 19, 1775, he took part in the Lexington-Concord fight which opened the Revolutionary War. He refused the chief command at the Battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775, taking part as a volunteer. He fell on the field that day.

In the Fall of 1775 the Quebec Act was passed. Ostensibly it had no reference to the older Colonies, but its effect on their revolutionary sentiment was tremendous, "perhaps as disastrous as that of any enacted during those years."³ The population of Quebec at the time presented difficult problems to the English governing authorities. The English numbered only 600, while the French numbered more than

¹ "Revolutionary New England," by James Truslow Adams. Boston. 1923. p. 354.

² For my biographical material I am indebted to "The Life and Times of Joseph Warren," by Louis F. Frothingham. Boston. 1885. It is not a first-rate biography, but the only one in type.

³ "Revolutionary New England." Adams. p. 396.

70,000. "In an effort to give more definite form to the government of the Province, to remove existing difficulties and to fulfill pledges, it was enacted that the government should be by an appointed Governor and Council; that the colonists could not be given the privilege of self-taxation; that the Catholics should enjoy the exercise of their religion; that trials should be without jury; and, for efficiency in the administration of the great stretch of wilderness west of the old Colonies and north of the Ohio river, the section should be added to Quebec."¹

The effect of the Quebec Act in New England was violent in the extreme. It made most of the Congregational ministers zealous Whigs, and the pulpit and the town-meeting stood as a unit.² On September 6 a call was sent for delegates from every settlement in Suffolk county to meet at Richard Woodward's tavern on High street, and to consider ways and means of protesting against the act. Every town and district was represented at the meeting. A committee was chosen to draw up a resolution, and the conference was adjourned till September 9, when it was to gather at Daniel Vose's house in Milton. It was at this second meeting that Dr. Warren, a member of the committee, read the "Suffolk Resolves." They were nineteen in number, and were received by the assembled delegates with wild enthusiasm. When carried to the Continental Congress they were cheered vociferously. In part they read as follows:

Resolved, That no obedience is due from the province to the late acts, but that they be rejected as the attempts of a wicked administration to enslave America: that so long as the justices are appointed or hold their places by any other tenure than that which the charter and the laws of the province direct, they must be considered, as unconstitutional officers; and, as such, no regard ought to be paid to them by the people of this country: that it be recommended to the collectors of taxes, and all other officers who have public money in their hands, to retain the same, and not to make any payment thereof to the provincial county treasurer, until the civil government of the province be placed upon a constitutional foundation, or it shall be otherwise ordered by the proposed provincial congress: that the persons who have accepted

¹ "Revolutionary New England." Adams. pp. 396-397.

² "The Beginnings of the American Revolution. Based on Contemporary Letters, Diaries and Other Documents," by Ellen Chase. 3 vols. N. Y. 1910. Vol. II. p. 48.

seats at the council-board, by virtue of a *mandamus* from the King, have acted in direct violation of the duty that they owe to their country: that this county do recommend it to all who have so highly offended, and have not already resigned, to make resignation on or before the 29th day of this month of September: that all refusing so to do shall, after said day, be considered as obstinate and incorrigible enemies to this country: that the fortifications begun and carrying on at the Boston Neck give reason to apprehend some hostile intentions against that town: that the late act establishing the Roman catholic religion in Quebec is dangerous in an extreme degree to the protestant religion, and to the civil rights and liberties of America: that whereas our enemies have flattered themselves that they shall make an easy prey of this numerous and brave people, from an apprehension that they are unacquainted with military discipline; we therefore, for the honor and security of this country and province, advise that such persons be elected in each town, as officers in the militia, as shall be judged of sufficient capacity, and who have evinced themselves the inflexible friends of the rights of the people; and that the inhabitants do use their utmost endeavors to acquaint themselves with the art of war, and do, for that purpose, appear under arms at least once every week.¹

These "Resolves" were adopted by the Continental Congress on September 17, 1775. Paul Revere took them to Philadelphia, where the Congress was in session, leaving Boston on horseback on the eleventh and arriving six days later.

C. THE MECHANICS

The stronghold of radical sentiment in New England, as in the other Colonies, was in the lower economic and social strata, among "the mechanics," as the loyalist writers used to refer to them deprecatingly. It was from their midst that the Adamses sprung, and it was from them that the rebellion took its characteristic tone. A larger percentage of them knew how to read and write than do the Irish of

¹ Quoted in full in "Pictorial History of the American Revolution," by Robert Sears. N. Y. 1845. P. 134.

today who have taken over their land. There was infinitely more gusto in them, and if they spent a great deal of time in church arguing about fatuous theological points, out of church they knew precisely what they wanted, and they minced no words in letting the world know what they were after.

November 1, 1766, when the Stamp Act went into effect, was a Friday. The mechanics, the mob, called it Black Friday, and made a great show of their intense displeasure with the act. Copies of it, surmounted with a death's head and the motto, "The Folly of England and the Ruin of America," were hawked about the streets of Boston. The bells of the churches were tolled throughout the day, and all the shops were closely shuttered as a sign that Liberty was dead. Flags were drooped at half mast from the idle shipping along the water front, and notices were posted everywhere, carrying this warning: "Let him that shall first distribute or employ stamp paper, look well to his house, his person and his furniture. Vox Populi."¹

In Boston two effigies were hung from the Liberty Tree: one of Lord George Grenville, chief promoter of the act, and the other of John Huske, reputed to be his principal lieutenant.² The following satire was attached to the breast of the latter:

Question. *What, Brother Huske? Why this is bad!*

Answer. *Ah, indeed! but I'm a wicked lad;*

My mother always thought me wild;

"The gallows is thy portion, child."

She often said; behold 'tis true,

And now the dog must have his due;

For idle gewgaws, wretched pelf,

I sold my country, d——d myself;

And for my great, unequalled crime,

The d——l takes H——e before his time.

But if some Brethren I could name,

Who shared the crime should share the same,

This glorious tree, though big and tall,

Indeed would never hold 'em all.³

¹ For the material in this paragraph I am indebted to "The Beginnings of the American Revolution . . ." Chase. Vol. I. p. 46 ff.; and "History of the War of Independence of the United States," by Charles Botta. Phila. 1820. 2 vols. Vol. I. p. 94 ff.

² Huske was a native of New Hampshire, and at the time a merchant in London and a member of Parliament. He was greatly detested in America for his supposed activity in bringing about the Stamp Act. Later he helped repeal it.

³ Quoted in "Our Country," by Benson J. Lossing. N. Y. 1895. 2 vols. Vol. I. p. 610.

At three in the afternoon of that memorable Black Friday the effigies were cut down, laid in a cart, trundled about, and hung from the gallows on the Neck, near Dover street. Here they were once more cut down, and rent limb from limb.

In one of Paul Revere's earliest caricatures the Stamp Act is represented by a Dragon confronted by Boston with a drawn sword. The aforementioned John Huske is seen hanging from the Liberty Tree in the background. Accompanying the caricature are the following anonymous verses:

*America! see thy free born sons advance
And at thy Tyrant point the threatening Lance!
Who with grim Horror opes his Hell-like Jaws,
And MAGNA CHARTA grasps between his Claws.
Lo BOSTON brave! unstain'd by Placemen's Bribe
"Attack the Monster and his venal Tribe."
See loyal Hampden to his Country true,
Present his Weapon to the Odious Crew;
See 'fore him prostrate treacherous PYM doth fall
And A—Sejanus loud for Mercy call!
Whilst brave RHODE ISLAND, & NEW YORK support,
HAMPDEN and FREEDOM, in their brave Effort:
Front to VIRGINIA, bold NEW HAMPSHIRE stands
All firmly sworn to shake off slavish Bands
And each United Province faithful joins
Against the Monster and his curst designs,
Mounted aloft perfidious H——K you see,
Scorned by his country, fits the Rope and Tree;
This be the real Fate! a fittest Place
For Freedom's Foes a selfish scornful Race!
"Above behold where Spite & Envy squirt
Their VENOM on the heads they cannot hurt;
But lo MINERVA with her Spear and Shield"
Appears with Hopes to make the Harpies yield.¹*

The Stamp Act was repealed on March 18, 1767, but the official news did not reach the Colonies till May 16. But long before that

¹ Quoted in "Life of Paul Revere," by Elbridge Henry Goss. Boston. 1891. 2 vols. Vol. I. pp. 31-32.

date rumors were rife over Boston that Parliament was about to repeal the act. On April 21 the vigilant Boston Sons of Liberty shelved their resolution to assemble a Continental Congress as a last resort in their battle against the obnoxious stamps, and instead voted that if the rumors of repeal should be confirmed they would celebrate the momentous event in a fitting manner, "Under the Deepest Sense of Duty and Loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign King George, and in respect and Gratitude to the Patriotic Ministry, Mr. Pitt, and the Glorious Majority of both Houses of Parliament, by whose Influence, under Divine Providence, against a most strenuous Opposition, a happy Repeal of the Stamp Act, so unconstitutional as well as Grievous to His Majesty's good Subjects of America, is attained; whereby our incontestable Right of Internal Taxation remains to us inviolate."

When the official news of the repeal reached Boston there was great rejoicing. The church bells tolled, and the cannons boomed. Twenty-five toasts were drunk in Faneuil Hall. "John Hancock erected a platform, where a pipe of Madeira was broached for all comers."¹ In the evening the whole town was illuminated. On the Common the Sons of Liberty erected a "Magnificent Pyramid illuminated with 280 Lamps. The 4 upper Stories were Ornamented with the Figures of their Majesties & Fourteen of the Patriots who had distinguished themselves for their love of Liberty; at the base were poetic inscriptions."² The names of the authors of the inscriptions are lost to history. Their stanzas are not much as sheer poetry, but they present an excellent picture of the temper of the times. One of them follows:

*O thou, whom next to Heav'n we most revere
 Fair LIBERTY! thou lovely Goddess hear!
 Have we not woo'd thee, won thee, held thee long,
 Lain in thy Lap & melted on thy Tongue.
 Thro Death & Dangers rugged paths pursu'd
 And led thee smiling to this SOLITUDE.
 Hid thee within our Hearts most golden Cell
 And brav'd the Powers of Earth & Powers of Hell.
 Goddess! We cannot part, thou must not fly;
 Be SLAVES! we dare to Scorn it — dare to die.*

¹ "The Beginnings of the American Revolution." Chase. Vol. I. p. 61.

² So described by Revere, and quoted in "Life of Revere." Vol. I. p. 53. A fine account of the celebration may be found in the same book, pp. 40-66.

Another:

*Boast foul Oppression, boast thy transient Reign
While honest FREEDOM struggle with her Chain;
But know the Sons of Virtue, hardy, brave,
Disdain to lose thro' mean Dispair to save
Arrouz'd in Thunder, awfull they appear
With proud deliverance stalking in their Rear
While Tyrant—Foes their pallid Fears betray
Shrink from their Arms, & give their Vengeance way.
See in th' unequal War OPPRESSORS fall
The hate, contempt, and endless Curse of all.¹*

B. THE RADICAL ECCLESIASTICS

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

The *Massachusetts Spy* for August 9, 1775, quotes the following letter written by Governor Hutchinson to John Pownall, a London friend, on June 8, 1770:

It is certain that the present leaders of the people in Boston wish for a general convulsion, not only by harangues, but by the prayers and preaching of many of the clergy under their influence, who inflame the minds of the people, and instil principles repugnant to the fundamental principles of government. At the Artillery Election Sermon, one minister in his prayers deplored the tragedy, etc., then prayed "that the people might have a martial spirit, that they might be instructed and expert in military discipline, and able to defend themselves against their proud oppressors, and the men whose feet are swift to shed innocent blood." Our pulpits are filled with such dark covered expressions and the people are led to think they may as lawfully resist the King's troops as any foreign enemy.

Four years later a Loyalist New Yorker had a similar complaint to make of the New England clergy. He denounced them for

¹ Both poems are *ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

their most wicked, malicious and inflammatory harangues . . . , spiring their godly hearers to the most violent opposition to Government; persuading them that the intention of the Government was to rule them with a rod of iron, and to make them all slaves; and assuring them that if they would rise as one man to oppose these arbitrary schemes, God would assist them to sweep away every ministerial tool, . . . from the face of the earth; that now was the time to strike, whilst Government at home was afraid of them; together with a long string of such seditious stuff, well calculated to impose on the poor devils their hearers, and make them run into every degree of extravagance and folly, which, if I foresee aright, they will have leisure enough to be sorry for.¹

About the same time, Peter Oliver, the last Chief Justice of Massachusetts under the colonial régime, said that "as to their Pulpits, many of them were converted into Gutters of Sedition, the Torrents bore down all before them. The Clergy had quite unlearned the Gospel, & had substituted Politicks in its Stead."²

All these three gentlemen were sound at least as to their facts. The New England clergy, as a whole, were among the most stalwart defenders of the cause of the Colonies, and they did probably as much as any other group to carry that cause to a successful conclusion. Their sermons won recruits by the hundreds and thousands. The most recent and most authoritative historian of their doings says: "The alliance of the ministers with the leaders of the agitation against England was one reason for its success. . . . No clever lawyer, no radical mechanic gave more warmth and color to the cause than some of these reverend divines."³

In 1767 there were nearly 600 regularly ordained ministers in New England, some Presbyterian, but mostly Congregational. Of the Episcopalian, Baptist and Quaker denominations there were only about twenty-five each. In 1770 there were in Massachusetts 294 Congregational churches, eleven Episcopalian, sixteen Baptist, and

¹ Force's Collection of American Archives. Fourth Series. Vol. I. pp. 301-302.

² "The Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion," by Peter Oliver. This history is still in MS. form, and at present is in the Egerton Collection. The quotation herein is given in "The New England Clergy and the American Revolution," by Alice M. Baldwin. The Duke University Press. 1928. p. 122. The Baldwin book is the most recent and by far the best study of its subject in print.

³ Baldwin. p. 171.

eighteen Quaker. The proportion was approximately the same in the other Colonies east of the Berkshires.¹

The New England clergy of the late Eighteenth Century were, for the most part, a fairly learned body of men, most of them being graduates of Harvard and Yale. Their influence on their congregations continued to be great, though much less than in the preceding century. In those days of little reading matter and little travel, the ministers, who attended the ministerial conventions and the meetings of the local associations, and corresponded with the ministers of other Colonies, were frequently the chief means of contact between their parishioners and the outside world. They preached not only on Sunday but on many special occasions of state. They did not limit themselves to "theological points"; they also discussed political matters, and with time these took the ascendancy. The annual election sermons thus became great political pamphlets.² The most common sources for the ministers' political theories were the Bible, especially the Old Testament; the writers of classical antiquity, particularly Thucydides, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, Tacitus, Sallust, Plutarch, Pliny, Josephus, Eusebius, Socrates, Demosthenes, Cæsar, Horace, Lactantius, Juvenal and Suetonius; and the works of John Locke, who probably had a greater influence on pre-Revolutionary political thought than any other thinker.

The ministers looked upon God as the great law giver, Whose relations with His Son and with men and women were determined by covenant. "God had made a covenant of works with Adam and Eve, who wilfully broke it. Then in His mercy He made a second covenant of grace 'ordaining the Lord Jesus . . . according to a covenant made between them both, to be mediator between God and Man.' The covenant made by Christ with His Father was entirely voluntary, a compact made between them in council. By it, salvation was promised to men in return for faith in the Christ. Christ, by His sacrifice, paid the penalty for a broken covenant which a just God, who ruled by law, could not but demand. In return God gave into the hands of His Son, as His delegate, the government of the world."³

Both God and Christ gave laws for the people to observe. These

¹ The most accurate information on the subject is to be found in "Discourse on Christian Union," by Ezra Stiles. Boston. 1761. p. 130 ff.; "A Letter to a Friend," by Charles Chauncy. Boston. 1767. p. 8 ff.; and "A Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts, from 1620 to 1858," by J. S. Clark. Boston. 1858. p. 190 ff.

² For a fine discussion of these election sermons, see Baldwin, p. 5 ff.

³ Baldwin. pp. 13-14.

laws form a "divine constitution"—a common phrase among the ministers. This divine law is three-fold. It includes the law of nature—or the general principles of justice and equity under which the race was supposed to have lived before the founding of any society, and which were therefore called natural rights—the law of the Old Testament, and the law of Christ. The divine law is, of course, fixed, sacred and inviolable. The origin of all human government is therefore divine. "God's government is founded on and limited by law and therefore all human governments must be so founded and limited, if patterned after His. A government, therefore, which exercises its authority unconstitutionally, acts illegally."¹ All just government is founded upon a compact between the governed and the governors. The magistrates are chosen by the majority of the people, but both the magistrates and the people are bound by law, which, in the last analysis, is the divine law. All governments which are not sanctioned by the people are really no governments at all, but "absolutely against the Law of God and Nature."² Such tyrannies may be resisted. "If every Man has a right to his Person or Property; he has also a Right to defend them, and a Right to all the necessary Means of Defence, and so has a Right of punishing all Insults upon his Person and Property."³

It was on the basis of these theories that the radical New England ministers attacked the Stamp Act and the Townshend Act. They claimed both were against the fundamental principles of the English Constitution, and therefore null and void. Some of the most bitter invectives against Great Britain at the time are to be found in the writings of the Reverends Samuel Cooper, William Patten, and Joseph Emerson, all of Boston and vicinity. Not a small number of the New England clergy were preaching independence long before 1776. With time the number increased, and "as the struggle grew hotter it became increasingly difficult for a minister to run counter to the will of his people. In some cases those suspected of open or secret loyalty to England were called before committees to clear themselves. Some lost their churches and a few suffered in various other ways."⁴

The part played by the ministers of New England in bringing about

¹ Baldwin. p. 19.

² Connecticut Election Sermon, by Jared Eliot. New Haven. 1731. p. 31.

³ "The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants, a Seasonable Plea for Liberty of Conscience and the Right of Private Judgment in matters of Religion, without any control from Human Authority," by the Rev. Elisha Williams. Boston. 1744. p. 3. The pamphlet is actually signed "Philaethes," but the author is supposed to be Williams.

⁴ Baldwin. p. 132.

the Revolution was thus extremely important. Steeped in Biblical learning and adepts at the magniloquent phraseology of the Book, they translated the struggle for independence into a holy cause.

I. JONATHAN MAYHEW

The three leading radical divines of New England in the half century preceding the Revolution were the Reverends Jonathan Mayhew, Samuel Cooper and Charles Chauncy, and of these the greatest was unquestionably the first. His biographer says of him, with much justice, "By the influence of his elevated theological views, a new era commenced in the Christian church, among the descendants of the Puritans. And from his day, men have been no longer obliged to discard reason, to be religious, either as to their belief or practice."¹ Obviously, the second sentence is an exaggeration. Men are still obliged to discard reason to be religious, in the commonly accepted meaning of the term, as they probably always will be. But Mayhew was surely one of the first American theologians to instil grave doubts regarding many traditional points into the minds of the faithful. Similarly did he poison the minds of his parishioners, and later of all the colonists, regarding the question of loyalty to the mother country.

He was born on Martha's Vineyard in 1720, and was graduated from Harvard in 1744. From 1747 till his death he was pastor of the West Church (Congregational), Boston. He was a powerful preacher from the beginning, and showed his independence even before ordination. He "gained a reputation for bringing a new style and manner into preaching. The son of a father who argued with ingenuity in behalf of human liberty, he was reputed to be a cheerful, liberal man, opposed to the gloomy doctrines of former times. Thus he early declared total depravity both dishonorable to the character of God and a libel on human nature. Mayhew's opposition to the five points of Calvinism was considered so imprudent that, at his ordination in the West Church, the Boston clergy declined the invitation to dine with the Council, and one cautious cleric advised his barber not to go and hear such a heretic."²

¹ "Memoir of the Life and Writings of Rev. Jonathan Mayhew, D.D.," by Alden Bradford. Boston. 1838. p. 10. For most of my biographical facts I am indebted to this book.

² "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. N. Y. 1927. Ch. V, "Philosophers and Divines, 1720-1789," by Woodbridge Riley. p. 78.

His influence on the political views of the colonists prior to the Revolution was greater than that of any other clergyman, except John Wise. He was a firm believer in the right of the Americans to govern themselves, and he delivered many a powerful discourse thereon. His celebrated sermon, "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers," preached on January 30, 1750, "may be considered the morning gun of the Revolution, the *punctum temporis* when that period began."¹ The Tories attacked him bitterly for it, and charged him (with little warrant) with instigating the Boston Stamp Act riots, as the result of which Governor Hutchinson's home was pillaged. In a sermon preached on Thanksgiving Day, 1766, he delivered a remarkable plea for civil and religious liberty. Toward the end of the same year, and during a fatal illness, he wrote a letter to James Otis,² which probably set forth the first plan for a union of all the Colonies. He died in 1766. The list of his published writings is almost as long as Cotton Mather's.³

Mayhew was a of studious turn of mind. He was indeed one of the best read men of his day in America. He read all the works of Dr. S. Clarke (a special favorite of his, who carried on a long debate with Leibnitz on the problem of liberty and necessity, as it was termed then, or free-will and determinism, as it is known today), Milton, Locke, Taylor, Wollaston, Hobbes, Spinoza, Sidney and Harrington. He was held in high respect by Chief Justice Sewall, Samuel Adams, James Bowdoin, James Otis, Judge Paine, Professor Winthrop and Charles Chauncy. The University of Aberdeen made him a D.D. in 1751, when he was only thirty—the only person to receive this honorary degree from it at such an early age, before or since. Naturally, he had a wide correspondence with scholars in England.

He had very good theological manners, if such a term may be used. He was against the extravagance of revivals, and always in favor of what he liked to call "rational religion." He was against Whitefield, of Great Awakening fame, in 1749, and said that his hearers were chiefly of "the more illiterate sort," and that the evangelist's discourses were "confused, conceited and enthusiastic."

At the time many of the New England divines were opposed to

¹ "The Pulpit of the American Revolution; or, the Political Sermons of the Period of 1776. With a Historical Introduction, Notes and Illustrations," by John Wingate Thornton. Boston. 1860. p. 43.

² The letter is quoted in full in Thornton. pp. 44-45.

³ The complete list is given in Bradford. p. 29 ff.

strict Calvinism, especially to the doctrine of total depravity.¹ But the most open and undisguised of the lot was Mayhew. The God of the immutable decrees of the Westminster Confession was unthinkable to him. He said:

Tho' God is, in the highest sense, an absolute sovereign; yet in *that* ill-sense, he is not certainly an arbitrary Being. . . . For what glory could possibly redound to any being acting unreasonably, or contrary to the dictates of true goodness? It is peculiarly absurd to suppose that He, who accounts goodness his glory, should aim at advancing it by *such* a conduct.²

He was unorthodox in many other respects. He wavered on the question of the Atonement, but he came out flat-footed on the Trinity and the supreme deity of Christ. He rejected the first as absurd, and the second as impossible. "No one in New England, except Dr. Mayhew in the middle of the [Eighteenth] Century, dared to treat the dogma of [the Trinity] as unscriptural and antiscritptural; as irrational and contradictory; as the invention of weak, visionary and selfish men."³ He called Christ "the Son of God," and he represented Him as the agent and medium of divine truth and grace. He thus anticipated the coming Unitarianism by almost two generations.⁴ He was a sort of *Ur*-Theodore Parker.

Like nearly all his ministerial contemporaries, he was very fanatical in his hatred of Catholicism, but his arguments against it had more humor and learning in them than those of many another, lay or clerical, including Samuel Adams. His most celebrated denunciation of Holy Church was "Popish Idolatry: A Discourse Delivered in the Chapel of Harvard College in Cambridge, New England, May 8, 1765, at the Lecture founded by the Honorable Paul Dudley, Esquire. By Jonathan Mayhew, D.D. Pastor of the West Church in Boston. Boston, 1765." He begins with a denunciation of the doctrine of the Eucharist, which, he says, is "as plainly absurd, self-repugnant,

¹ A list of the more important of them is given *ibid.* p. 24.

² "Two Discourses on the Nature, Extent and Perfection of the Divine Goodness," by Jonathan Mayhew. Boston. 1763. p. 16. See "A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States," by Williston Walker. N. Y. 1900. In p. 277 *ff.* Dr. Walker tells how Jonathan Edwards tried to get Dr. Edward Wigglesworth, Hollis professor of divinity at Harvard, to come out against Mayhew. Wigglesworth declined to do so.

³ Bradford. p. 452.

⁴ The first Unitarian manifesto in America was issued in 1819.

and impossible to be true, as any that can be imagined.”¹ His argument is that the doctrine assumes the impossible every Sunday morning: the presence of the physical body of Christ in all places. “The evidence of sense is the most certain that we are capable of: and by this we know that transubstantiation is false. . . . This doctrine then, being plainly false, the Church of Rome is certainly guilty of idolatry, in worshipping the eucharist as true God.”²

He applies the same reasoning to the worship of saints and angels, and of their pictures and images. “If then,” he says,

the church of Rome be grossly idolatrous in the several respects aforesaid; highly dishonouring God, and the one Mediator whom he hath appointed, by an undue worship of, and dependence upon, many creatures; it follows, that she is so far from being the only true church, and chaste spouse of Christ, that she is a most corrupt one, a filthy prostitute, who hath forsaken her first love, and is become, indeed, the mother of harlots.³

The Catholic clergy, under the pretext of religion, have always aimed to take all the property and liberty of man unto themselves.

Altho’ we had no regard for true religion, yet we ought in reason and prudence to detest the church of Rome, in the same degree, that we prize our freedom. Her laws, more arbitrary than those of Draco, are, in effect, like his, all written in blood. Popery and liberty are incompatible; at irreconcilable enmity with each other. May gracious Heaven ever preserve us from the one, and bless us with the other.⁴

Mayhew’s most celebrated sermon was “A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers: With some Reflections of the Resistance made to King Charles I. and on the anniversary of his Death: In which the mysterious Doctrine of that Prince’s Saintship and Martyrdom is unriddled.” He preached it in the West Meeting-House, Boston, on the first Sunday in February, 1750. It went through several editions in the next ten years, and its effect, both at home and abroad, was momentous. It is one of the glories of pre-Revolutionary political literature. In it is to be

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 10.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 11-12.

³ *Op. cit.* pp. 43-44.

⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 49.

found one of the most vigorous onslaughts on the episcopacy ever penned in this country, and in it is to be found a plea for liberty that would have done honor to Jefferson himself. Ecclesiastical tyranny, says Mayhew, in the preface,

is the most cruel, intolerable and impious of any. People have no security against being priest-ridden but by keeping all imperious bishops, and other clergymen who love to "lord it over God's heritage," from getting their foot into the stirrup at all. Let them be once fairly mounted, and their "beasts, the laity," may prance and flounce about to no purpose; and they will at length be so jaded and hacked by these reverend jockeys, that they will not even have spirits enough to complain that their backs are galled, or, like Balaam's ass, to "rebuke the madness of the prophet."¹

He now brings the preface to this mighty climax:

Tyranny brings ignorance and brutality along with it. It degrades men from their just rank into the class of brutes; it damps their spirits; it suppresses arts; it extinguishes every spark of noble ardor and generosity in the breasts of those who are enslaved by it; it makes naturally strong and great minds feeble and little, and triumphs over the ruins of virtue and humanity. This is true of tyranny in every shape: there can be nothing great and good where its influence reaches. For which reason it becomes every friend to truth and human kind, every lover of God and the Christian religion, to bear a part in opposing this hateful monster.²

He then demolishes completely the argument that the people must give unlimited and absolute obedience to the magistrates under all conditions and at all times, his conclusion at this point being: "It will not follow that because civil government is, in general, a good institution, and necessary to the peace and happiness of human society, therefore there are no supposable cases in which resistance to it can be innocent."³

He follows this thought with these calm but pointed observations:

¹ The sermon is reprinted in full in Thornton. pp. 39-104. This excerpt, p. 50.

² *Ibid.* p. 51.

³ *Ibid.* p. 69.

If the end of all civil government be the good of society; if this be the thing that is aimed at in constituting civil rulers; and if the motive and argument for submission to government be taken from the apparent usefulness of civil authority,—it follows, that when no such good end can be answered by submission, there remains no argument or motive to enforce it; and if, instead of this good end's being brought about by submission, a contrary end is brought about, and the ruin and misery of society effected by it, here is a plain and positive reason against submission in all such cases, should they ever happen. And therefore, in such cases, a regard to the public welfare ought to make us withhold from our rulers that obedience and submission which it would otherwise be our duty to render them.¹

He now goes into a detailed discussion of the uses and evils of monarchy, and makes the first broad hint at rebellion and democracy. The writing in this section takes on more vigor and directness.

Nothing can well be imagined more directly contrary to common sense than to suppose that millions of people should be subjected to the arbitrary, precarious pleasure of one single man,—who has naturally no superiority over them in point of authority,—so that their estates, and everything that is valuable in life, and even their lives also, shall be absolutely at his disposal, if he happens to be wanton and capricious enough to demand them. What unprejudiced man can think that God made *all* to be thus subservient to the lawless pleasure and frenzy of *one*, so that it shall always be a sin to resist him? Nothing but the most plain and express revelation from heaven could make a sober, impartial man believe such a monstrous, unaccountable doctrine; and, indeed, the thing itself appears so shocking, so out of all proportion, that it may be questioned whether all the miracles that ever were wrought could make it credible that this doctrine really came from God. At present there is not the least syllable in Scripture which gives any countenance to it. The hereditary, indefeasible, divine right of kings, and the doctrine of non-resistance, which is built upon the supposition of such a right, are altogether as fabulous and chimerical as transubstantiation, or any of the most absurd reveries of ancient or modern visionaries.²

¹ Thornton. pp. 78-79.

² *Ibid.* pp. 83-84.

Four or five more pages of such invective, and he lets loose this blast:

A people, really oppressed in a great degree by their sovereign, cannot well be insensible when they are so oppressed; and such a people—if I may allude to an ancient fable—have, like the hesperian fruit, a dragon for their protector and guardian. Nor would they have any reason to mourn if some Hercules should appear to dispatch him. For a nation thus abused to arise unanimously and resist their prince, even to the dethroning him, is not criminal, but a reasonable way of vindicating their liberties and just rights: it is making use of the means, and the only means, which God has put into their power for mutual and self defense. And it would be highly criminal in them not to make use of this means. It would be stupid tameness and unaccountable folly for whole nations to suffer *one* unreasonable, ambitious, and cruel man to wanton and riot in their misery. And in such a case, it would, of the two, be more rational to suppose that they that did not resist, than that they who did, would receive to themselves damnation.¹

Robert Treat Paine, a young Boston radical who was a friend of Mayhew, called him “the father of civil and religious liberty in Massachusetts.”² Cyrus Augustus Bartol, Mayhew’s last successor in the pulpit of the West Church, said of “A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers,” that it was “the first peal of the trumpet of freedom in this land, blown clear and loud enough to be heard over land and water far and wide.”³ He added: “I must, for grandeur of aim, and mighty will to bring to pass his purposes, put him in the first rank of human spirits.”⁴ John Eliot, the biographer, and a contemporary of Mayhew, said: “No American author ever obtained higher reputation.”⁵ John Adams went further than anybody else in his admiration of Mayhew. He called him “a whig of the first magnitude, — a clergyman equalled

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 87–88.

² Quoted by Thornton. p. 43.

³ “The West Church and its Ministers,” by Cyrus Augustus Bartol. Boston. 1856. p. 104.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 84.

⁵ “A Biographical Dictionary, Containing a Brief Account of the First Settlers, and Other Eminent Characters among the Magistrates, Ministers, Literary and Worthy Men, in New England,” by John Eliot. Boston. 1809. p. 323.

by very few of any denomination in piety, virtue, genius, or learning; whose works will maintain his character as long as New England shall be free, integrity esteemed, or wit, spirit, humor, reason, and knowledge admired." Of the celebrated "Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission," he ventured the opinion that it was "superior to any in Swift or Franklin."¹

These opinions of the man have survived to relatively recent times. Tyler, in his excellent "Literary History of the American Revolution, 1763-1783," devotes a whole chapter of twenty pages to him, calling him "a great master of the art of rational and passionate speech."² Of his sermons he says that they are "essentially orations, not to say, fulminations,—their sentences being framed, or rather born, for strong and passionate utterance, and swelling into climaxes of argument and emotion. He has a towering and soaring sort of eloquence. He nobly wields majestic Biblical language."³ Woodbridge Riley speaks of him as "a master of ironic attack," though he adds that "when it comes to defending his views he is weak."⁴

Mayhew was surely all of these things, though Adams, with his usual flair for exaggeration, went too far in saying that he was superior to Swift. He was not an original thinker. There is little that is really new even in "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission."⁵ But what he did with the ideas he borrowed from Locke and Harrington and Sidney! With what simple, direct and superb prose he clothed them! Few things in all American political writing have been so effective as the terrific blast against tyranny in the preface to "A Discourse,"—the passage beginning, "Tyranny brings ignorance and brutality along with it. It degrades men from their just rank into the class of brutes; it damps their spirits, it suppresses arts; it extinguishes every spark of noble ardor in the breasts of those who are enslaved by it; . . ."

There was a fine dignity in all he did, even when he indulged in that favorite sport of the Puritans, baiting Catholics. Compare his denunciation of them with that of Samuel Adams. That of the latter has a touch of the rabid about it, but Mayhew's has the plausibility

¹ Both quotations are in Thornton, p. 44.

² Tyler. Vol. I. p. 121.

³ *Ibid.* p. 128.

⁴ Riley in "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. p. 80.

⁵ Cf. "The New England Clergy and the American Revolution," by Alice M. Baldwin. Durham, N. C. 1928. p. 44.

of the man of learning who lets loose on the political stump. He is one of the glories of early American history.¹ He based his entire case for ecclesiastical and political liberty on the Bible, the very same Bible that Cotton Mather and John Cotton used to bolster up their pleas for theocracy. But with what a different attitude Mayhew read the Book, what more he saw in it! He had

learnt from the holy scriptures, that wise, brave, and virtuous men were always friends to liberty; that God gave the Israelites a king, or absolute monarch, in his anger, because they had not sense and virtue enough to like a free commonwealth, and to have Himself for their King; that the Son of God came down from heaven to make us "free indeed"; and that "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."²

2. CHARLES CHAUNCY, SAMUEL COOPER, AND OTHERS

Charles Chauncy³ was born in Boston in 1705, and was graduated from Harvard at the age of sixteen. He became pastor of the First Church of Boston in 1727, and remained in that post till his death in 1787. Tyler says of him that he was "a man of leonine heart, of strong, cool brain, of uncommon moral strength. . . . He was an orthodox rationalist; and he stood in the line of that intellectual development among the clergy of New England, which at a later day culminated in Unitarians."⁴ This is excessive. Chauncy was a very learned man, and delivered many a mighty blow against theological barbarism and obscurantism in early New England, but he was not much of a scholar—as say Jonathan Edwards was—, and he was

¹ It is a puzzle why he is so little known among Americans, adults or children. But then, on the other hand, maybe it is not such a puzzle. Tyler, who gives over a whole chapter to Mayhew, is seldom read in the schools or colleges, but Charles F. Richardson, Barrett Wendell, and Louis V. Parrington, the Liberals, who are widely read everywhere—these Liberals do not give Mayhew so much as a line!

² "The Snare Broken. A Thanksgiving Discourse, preached at the Desire of the West Church in Boston, N. E., Friday, May 23, 1766, occasioned by the Repeal of the Stamp Act." Boston. 1766. p. 35.

³ The name is frequently spelled Chauncey, even in the original sermons. Later commentators have used both forms. One of them, Moses Coit Tyler, uses the longer spelling in "A History of American Literature During the Colonial Period," Vol. II, p. 199 *ff.*, and the shorter one in "A History of the American Revolution," p. 277. I use the shorter form, because I like it better.

⁴ "A History of American Literature During the Colonial Period," by Moses Coit Tyler. 2 vols. N. Y. 1895. Vol. II. p. 200.

considerably less tolerant¹ and enlightened than Jonathan Mayhew. He was incapable of writing the celebrated essay on the freedom of the will that the first did, and he never came out flat-footed against the doctrines of total depravity and the Trinity, as did the second. So far was Chauncy from being a spiritual ancestor of Unitarianism that even William Ellery Channing was a radical compared to him.

Nevertheless, he did useful service in the battle against the religious fanatics. One of his sermons on the general subject is a little masterpiece. It was entitled, "Enthusiasm described and caution'd against," and was printed in Boston in 1742. Chauncy had witnessed the gyrations and contortions that accompanied the Whitefield harangues, and they gave him much to think about. He said:

The enthusiast is one who has a conceit of himself as a person favored with the extraordinary presence of the Deity. He mistakes the workings of his own passions for divine communications; and fancies himself immediately inspired by the Spirit of God, when all the while he is under no other influence than that of an overheated imagination.

The cause of this enthusiasm is a bad temperament of the blood and spirits. 'Tis properly a disease, a sort of madness. . . . None are so much in danger of it, as those in whom melancholy is the prevailing ingredient in their constitution. . . . And what extravagances, in this temper of mind, are they not capable of, and under the specious pretext too of paying obedience to the authority of God? Many have fancied themselves acting by the immediate warrant from heaven, while they have been committing the most undoubted wickedness. There is, indeed, scarce anything so wild, either in speculation or practice, but they have given in to it; they have, in many instances, been blasphemers of God and open disturbers of the peace of the world. But in nothing does the enthusiasm of these persons discover itself more, than in the disregard they express to the dictates of reason. They are above the force of argument, beyond conviction from a calm and sober address to their understandings.²

Similar thoughts, expressed in equally effective English, may be found in the sermon he published the year following, in 1743. It was

¹ "The New England Clergy and the American Revolution," by Alice M. Baldwin. Durham, N. C. 1928. p. 92.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 3-5.

entitled, "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England." Chauncy was not a great metaphysician. His one major attempt in the field, "The Benevolence of the Deity, fairly and impartially considered" (Boston, 1784), is full of shoddy thinking. He goes into a long discussion of the freedom of the will and the proofs of the existence of God, but his chief argument for both is that they are necessary for the moral character of man. In his general attitude toward religious problems, however, he was singularly enlightened for his age. He wrote several fine pamphlets arguing that it was impossible for God to be the barbarian that Edwards pictured Him to be. Among them are "Salvation of All Men, Illustrated and Vindicated as a Scripture Doctrine" (Boston, 1782), "Divine Glory brought to View, in the Final Salvation of All Men" (Boston, 1783), and "The Mystery hid from Ages and Generations, made manifest by the Gospel-Revelation; or, the Salvation of All Men the Grand Thing aimed at in the Scheme of God" (Boston, 1784). The second of these contains the essence of Chauncy's theological doctrine: optimism with regard to the ways of God and faith in the destiny of man. It is written in the form of a reply to a Calvinist, who believes firmly in the orthodox creed of total depravity.

I have such a veneration for my Creator as to suppose He needs no foil to set off His perfections; such an opinion of the Saints, as to imagine they could relish their felicity, without being spectators of the misery of the damned. I place such a value upon the merits and death of my Redeemer, as to conclude all will be happy for whom He suffered on the Cross. And I pay such a regard to the positive declarations of Scripture, as to anticipate the restitution of all things, when the ruins of the Fall shall be more than repaired, and the creature which now groans shall groan no more. . . . The God to whom you pay your religious homage, needs the introduction of sin and misery, in order to illustrate His own character, and display His divine perfections. I bow my knee to a power intrinsically excellent, who can shine without contrast, whose glory is essential, whose happiness is immutable, and who would be the admiration of His creatures, even were guilt and suffering banished from the universe. You expect to look down from Heaven upon numbers of wretched objects, confined in the Pit of Hell, and blaspheming their Creator forever. I hope to see the prison-doors opened, and to hear those tongues which

are now profaning, chaunting His praise. In one word, you imagine the Divine Glory will be advanced by immortalizing sin and misery: I, by exterminating both natural and moral evil, and introducing universal happiness. Which of our systems is best supported, let reason and Scripture determine.¹

Chauncy's services to the cause of the Revolution were considerably less than those of Mayhew. He was not so fiery a man and he did not have the latter's power to dramatize simple feelings and lay bare the essence of fundamental ideas of government. His specialty was liberal theology and not revolutionary pamphleteering. But he probably did more than anybody else to swing that fairly large element of the population—the like of whom are forever with us—who had to have a respectable reason for doing something to which they were instinctively opposed. He was especially valuable in this respect since he had a great faith in the case of the Colonies. "Our cause is so just," he felt, "that if human efforts should fail, a host of angels would be sent to support it."²

Among his more effective political writings are "A Discourse on 'the Good News from a Far Country,'" delivered on the day the repeal of the Stamp Act was officially announced in Boston, July 24, 1766; "Trust in God the Duty of a People in a Day of Trouble," Boston, May 30, 1770; "A Letter to a Friend, giving a Concise but just Representation of the Hardships and Sufferings the Town of Boston is exposed to, and must undergo, in consequence of the late Act of the British Parliament," Boston, 1774; and "The Accursed Thing must be taken away from among the People, if they would reasonably hope to stand before their Enemies. A Sermon preached at the Thursday-Lecture in Boston, September 3, 1778."

But his most celebrated political discourse was the Massachusetts Election Sermon, which he delivered at Boston in 1747. It created so much antagonism among the Tories that the General Court refused, for a while, to follow the usual custom of printing it. When this news was relayed to Chauncy he replied, "It shall be printed, whether the General Court print it or not. And do you, Sir, . . . say from me that, if I wanted to initiate and instruct a person into all kinds of iniquity and double dealing, I would send him to our General Court."³ It was

¹ "Divine Glory brought to View, in the Final Salvation of All Men. A Letter to the Friend of Truth, by One who wishes well to all Mankind," by Charles Chauncy. Boston. 1783. pp. 3-4.

² Quoted in "The Life of James Otis," by William Tudor. Boston. 1823. p. 148.

³ Quoted by Baldwin. p. 43.

printed. In substance the sermon is diluted Mayhew. It posits the origin of government in the will of God, and cautions the governors that they must confine themselves within the limits of the covenant.

If the prerogatives of the King are sacred, so also are the rights of Lords and Commons. . . . The law of righteousness is violated . . . if one part of the government is really kept from exerting itself, according to the true meaning of the constitution, . . . The designed ballance is no longer preserved; and which side soever the scale turns, whether on the side of sovereignty, or popularity, 'tis forced down by a false weight, which by degrees, will overturn the government, at least, according to this particular model.¹

A much more active man than Chauncy was Samuel Cooper, whose reputation as a preacher and orator was one of the sensations of the time. Of him and his brother the London *Political Register* in 1780 said the following:

William Cooper . . . is one of the greatest knaves and most inveterate rebels in New England. He is a very hot-headed man, and constantly urged the most violent measures. He was prompted secretly by his brother, the Reverend Samuel Cooper, who, though a minister of peace and to all outward appearances a meek and heavenly man, yet was one of the chief instruments in stirring up the people to take arms. Hancock, and many leaders of the rebellion were his parishioners. . . . This pastor was of such remarkable popularity, that the aisles of the church would be thronged with eager listeners, and he was a favorite of loyalists and rebels.²

Samuel Adams thought very highly of Cooper's abilities, and frequently sought his advice.³ Franklin thought likewise, and kept up a constant correspondence with him throughout the war. In 1770 he wrote to him from Europe: "You have given, in a little Compass,

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 15-16.

² Quoted in "The Hundred Boston Orations, 1770-1852," by J. S. Loring. Boston. 1853. p. 9.

³ Adams once wrote to Cooper, "I wish your Leisure would admit of your frequently favoring me with your Thoughts of our publick Affairs. I do assure you I shall make use of them, as far as my ability shall extend, to the Advantage of the Country." Quoted by Baldwin, p. 156, note 10.

so full and Comprehensive a View of the Circumstances on which is founded the Security Britain has for all reasonable Advantages from us, tho' things were put into the same State in which they were before the Stamp Act, that I cannot refrain communicating an extract of your Letter, where I think it may be of Use; and I think I shall publish it."¹

Cooper was born in Boston in 1724, and was made pastor of the Brattle Street Church at the age of twenty. He remained in the same pulpit till his death in 1783. He was chaplain to the General Court in 1758-1770 and in 1777-1783. He wrote a great deal for the radical *Boston Gazette*, but his published sermons are relatively few in number. Perhaps his most celebrated pamphlet was "The Crisis," which he wrote anonymously in June, 1754, and in which he attacked the proposed Excise Bill. He presents the familiar revolutionary arguments of the time, pointing out that the bill was "inconsistent with the Natural Rights of every private family in the Community," that it was an "Entering Wedge into the Constitution," and that it would eventually plunge the people into "irretrievable Slavery."² The pamphlet aroused considerable noise, but it was mainly because of the personal influence of its author (the anonymity was soon removed), rather than for the vigor of its logic or the effectiveness of its language. Its chief reason for remembrance is that it anticipates the title of Thomas Paine's infinitely more able pamphlet published twenty-two years later.

In one other respect does Cooper have a claim upon our memory. He was one of the few public figures of his time to realize the value of the French alliance entered into by Franklin. He was very hospitable to the French generals and officers of state who visited this country during the war. He kept Franklin informed of all that was going on over here, and spread the news, political, social and cultural, that Franklin transmitted to him. He thus helped greatly in sowing Continental ideas in the New World. "He had seen that, without France, the United States would probably not be able to hold out to the end. He had viewed with alarm the hostility of the Bostonians and all the Congregational clergy toward France, and he had set himself courageously to battle against the current. His resources did not allow him to do much. He accepted the aid of the King of France, who gave

¹ Smyth edition of Franklin's works. Vol. V. p. 286. For a list of some of the pamphlets, etc. Franklin sent Cooper from France, see Baldwin, p. 9, note 14.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 4-13.

him, as he did Paine, a thousand dollars a year to allow him to hire a secretary or an assistant."¹

A contemporary of Samuel Cooper, and in many ways as capable a man, was the Rev. John Lathrop, pastor of the Old North Church, Boston. Unlike most other Boston clergymen, he was not a graduate of Harvard, but of Princeton. The sermon he preached the Sunday after the Boston Massacre, "Innocent Blood Crying to God From the Streets of Boston" (1770), was reprinted in Boston and in London shortly afterward, and was quoted from extensively in the English press. Four years later he delivered an even more powerful sermon, "A Sermon Preached to the Ancient and Honourable Artillery-Company, in Boston, June 6, 1774." He urged his countrymen to use force against Great Britain, and he pointed out to them the justice of such a procedure:

The original compacts . . . which lie in the foundation of all civil societies, may not be disturbed. A single article may not be altered but with the consent of the whole body.—Whoever makes an alteration in the established constitution, whether he be a subject or a ruler, is guilty of treason. Treason of the worst kind: Treason against the state. . . . That we may and ought, to resist, and even make war against those rulers who leap the bounds prescribed them by the Constitution, and attempt to oppress and enslave the subjects, is a principle on which alone the great revolutions which have taken place in our nation can be justified. A principle which has been supported by the most celebrated Divines as well as civilians.²

"The Lord of providence," he said, "has put a price into our hands, and if we are not greatly wanting to ourselves, we may be free, we may be rich, we may be the most powerful people under the heavens."³

The Rev. Gad Hitchcock of Pembroke, in his Massachusetts Election Sermon for 1774, was equally forceful in his arguments for the use of violence against "the real danger to liberty and property":

¹ "The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America," by Bernard Faÿ. N. Y. 1927. Translated by Ramon Guthrie. p. 133.

² Massachusetts Artillery Sermon, by John Lathrop, preached June 6, 1774. Boston. p. 51.

³ *Ibid.* p. 29.

Our danger is not visionary, but real—Our contention is not about trifles, but about liberty and property; and not ours only, but those of posterity, to the latest generation. . . . For however few . . . even from among ourselves, appear sufficiently disposed to ridicule the rights of America, and the liberties of the subjects, 'tis plain St. Paul, who was a good judge, had a very different sense of them—He was on all occasions for standing fast not only in the liberties with which Christ had made him free . . . but also in that liberty, with which the laws of nature and the Roman state, had made him free from oppression and tyranny.¹

Then there was the Rev. Elisha Fish of Upton, who, just before the Battle of Bunker Hill, reminded the people of Massachusetts that in the proposed contest they would only defend their inalienable rights as given to them in their covenant with the Creator:

The covenant between prince and people most naturally represents the covenant between God and his creatures. God creates his people, therefore they are bound to a sacred regard of the covenant of their creator: But the people in a political sense create the prince; therefore this covenant should be maintained with the greatest regard of any social covenant of a civil nature on earth, and the breach of this covenant is greater on the side of the prince than the people, for it is against the whole body. . . . If the prince sin against the subjects, it is against his political creators, and in that view highly aggravated.²

The other radical ministers who helped rouse the people against Great Britain were too numerous to be discussed in detail here. The most prominent of them were the following: Ebenezer Pemberton (Artillery Sermon, Boston, 1756), Amos Adams ("Religious Liberty an invaluable Blessing." Two sermons, Roxbury, December 3, 1767. Published Boston, 1768), Nathaniel Appleton ("A Thanksgiving Sermon on the Total Repeal of the Stamp Act," Boston, 1766), Timothy Hilliard ("The duty of a People under the oppression of Man, to seek deliverance from God. The Substance of Two Sermons, De-

¹ Massachusetts Election Sermon, by Gad Hitchcock. Boston. 1774. pp. 46-47.

² "A Discourse delivered at Worcester, March 28, 1775," by Elisha Fish, at the desire of the Convention of Committees for the county of Worcester. pp. 13-14.

livered at Barnstable, July 14th, 1774." Boston, 1774), Samuel Stillman ("Sermon on the Repeal of the Stamp Act, Boston, May 17, 1766." Boston, 1776), Peter Whitney ("The Transgression of a Land punished by a multitude of Rulers. . . . Two Discourses delivered July 14, 1774." Boston, 1774), Samuel Cook of Cambridge (Massachusetts Election Sermon, May 30, 1770), William Gordon of the Third Church in Roxbury (Thanksgiving Sermon, December 15, 1774), President Samuel Langdon of Harvard (Massachusetts Election Sermon, May 31, 1775), Samuel West of Dartmouth (Massachusetts Election Sermon, May 29, 1776), Phillips Payson of Chelsea (Massachusetts Election Sermon, May 27, 1778) and Simeon Howard of the West Church in Boston (Massachusetts Election Sermon, May 31, 1780).¹

¹ An excellent bibliography may be found in Baldwin, pp. 183-209. Another is in "A Literary History of the American Revolution," by Moses Coit Tyler. N. Y. 1905. 2 vols. Vol. II. pp. 429-483. The bibliography in "The Cambridge History of American Literature," Vol. I., pp. 454-457, is so brief as to be worthless. The Baldwin bibliography, which takes in all of New England, is the most recent and best of the lot. The book, in general, is a model of what an historical monograph should be.

CHAPTER IV

Connecticut

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Connecticut

I. STEPHEN JOHNSON

PRIOR TO THE REVOLUTION, CONNECTICUT WAS "THE MOST independent of all the Colonies."¹ In a way it was really an independent Republic. It elected all of its own officials, and had practically no communication with the home government. Its laws were not subject to parliamentary review, and it had no representative of the Crown within its borders. Nevertheless, it was a hotbed of Revolutionary sentiment from the beginning. Later on it was second only to Massachusetts in the vigor with which it resisted the encroachments of the mother country upon the liberties of her sister Colonies. Its radical ministers were almost as active as those of the Bay State.² The established church in its borders was the Presbyterian, and the adherents of all other sects were forced to help pay for its upkeep. There were very few Episcopalians, but the people as a whole, just the same, were violently against the attempts of the Church of England to found an episcopacy in this country, on the general ground that such an episcopacy would be prejudicial to the liberties of all the people of the New World.³

The ministers of Connecticut, like those of Massachusetts, from the first founded their political thinking upon their theological thinking, and maintained a close connection between ecclesiastical democracy and political democracy. Early in the Eighteenth Century a group of Connecticut divines preached a series of election sermons that called for governmental liberty in the name of the law of God. The most influential of these early ministers, John

¹ "Revolutionary New England," by James Truslow Adams, Boston, 1923, p. 101. See also *ibid.* p. 258 ff.

² Alice M. Baldwin, in her excellent "The New England Clergy and the American Revolution," p. 98, says: "Influential as were the ministers of Massachusetts in rousing and keeping alive opposition to the Stamp Act, those of Connecticut played even a more important part in these early days." This is an exaggeration. Connecticut produced no Mayhew or Cooper.

³ Adams, p. 142.

Bulkley of Colchester, in his election sermon for 1713, pointed out that

Its not in the Power of Rulers to make what Laws they please, Suspend, Abrogate or Disanul them at pleasure. . . . As for Mens Civil Rights, as Life, Liberty, Estate, &c. God has not Subjected these to the Will & Pleasure of Rulers. They may not Enact any Laws to the Prejudice of them, nor Disanul such Laws of the State as tend to Secure these Interests. . . . No Law of the Civil Magistrate can bind in Opposition to the Divine. . . . All must be done in due Subordination to those Laws of God that have made it a Sin in any to invade these Rights.¹

Unquestionably the greatest of the latter radical ministers was the Rev. Stephen Johnson of Lyme, "a forgotten Connecticut Patriot."² Bancroft the historian thought he was "incomparable,"³ and Baldwin, the latest investigator, is inclined to agree with this characterization.⁴ He was born on May 17, 1724, in Newark, New Jersey, and was graduated from Yale in 1743. The following year he married, and on December 10, 1746, he was made pastor of the church at Old Lyme, where he remained for the next forty years, till his death on November 8, 1786. As a theologian he was as far removed from Jonathan Mayhew as one possibly could be. He was a dyed-in-the-wool Calvinist. The full title of his best-known theological work follows: "The Everlasting Punishment of the Ungodly, Illustrated and evinced to be a Scripture Doctrine; and the Salvation of all Men, As taught in several late Publications, confuted. In a new Arrangement of the Subject in Dispute. In Three Parts. In the First, — The insinuating arguments of the Universalists are considered and

¹ Some of the other early Connecticut radical ministers, and their election sermons, were the following: Joseph Moss of Darby ("An Election Sermon . . . The Discourse sheweth, That frequent Readings and Studying the Scripture and the Civil Law of the Common Wealth, is Needful and Profitable for Rulers." New London. 1715), Samuel Whittelsey of Wallingford ("A Public Spirit Described & Recommended." New London. 1731), William Worthington of Saybrook ("The Duty of Rulers and Teachers in Unitedly Leading God's People, Urged and Explained." New London. 1744), and Elnathan Whitman of Hartford ("The Character and Qualifications of good Rulers, and the Happiness of their Administration." New London. 1745.).

² This is the title of an oration delivered by Col. Edward Everett Sill, on September 20, 1900, in New Haven, before the Connecticut Society of the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America. The oration appears as No. 4 of the publications of the society, New Haven, 1901.

³ "History of the United States," by George Bancroft. 6 vols. Vol. III. N. Y. 1886, with author's last revisions. p. 160.

⁴ Baldwin. p. 100.

refuted; and the Credibility of the commonly received Doctrine is evinced. In the Second, — The everlasting Punishment of the Ungodly is illustrated and evinced. In the Third, — The Arguments of the Universalists, from Scripture Texts, and their Evasions, are considered and Refuted."

In the field of politics, however, he was as radical as any, and was one of the great champions of the cause of independence south of Massachusetts. He was fairly well learned, and though not the "strong writer"¹ that Tyler thinks he was, he nevertheless commanded a clear and fairly effective style. He was the author of several inflammatory anonymous pamphlets, and also wrote a great deal for the New London *Gazette*. The first of his contributions to the *Gazette* appeared in the issue for September 6, 1765. It was signed "Addison," and was addressed "To the Freemen of the Colony of Connecticut." He wrote for the paper every week for two months, and then stopped for a while. The issues containing his articles were read far and wide. Copies were carried to New Hampshire and to Georgia, and were reprinted all along the line.² In the issue for November 1, 1765, which contained the last of his papers in the first series, he explained, "O my Country, for you I have wrote; for you I daily pray and mourn, and to save your invaluable Rights and Freedom, I would willingly die."

The most interesting and by far the most vigorous sermon by Johnson was the one he preached on the Public Fast Day, on December 18, 1765, at Newport, R. I. It was entitled, "Some Important Observations on Account of the Peculiar Circumstances of the Present Day." It was published in the same year in Newport. Johnson calls the Stamp Act "a high and aggravated injustice" that is only bringing about the "enslaving of a free people." He then rehearses the familiar arguments against the British policies with regard to America, remarking, "May we not ask, who is the aggressor, he that invades the right of a free people, or they who defend only what is their own?" His final plea, both to the mother country and to the Americans, is this:

The hearts of Americans are cut to the quick by the [Stamp] act; we have reason to fear very interesting and terrible consequences, though by no means equal to tyranny or slavery. But

¹ Tyler. "A Literary History of the American Revolution." Vol. I. p. 100.

² Sill. p. 38.

what an enraged, despairing people will do, when they come to see and feel their ruin, time only can reveal. . . . The liberty of free inquiry is one of the first and most fundamental of a free people. They may publish their grievances: they have an undoubted right to be heard and relieved. The American governments or inhabitants may associate for the mutual defence of their birthright liberties. It is the joy of thousands that there is union and concurrence in a general congress. Shut not your eyes to your danger, O my countrymen! Do nothing to destroy or betray the rights of your posterity; do nothing to sully or shade the memory of your noble ancestors. Let all the governments and all the inhabitants in them unitedly resolve to a man, with an immovable stability, to sacrifice their lives and fortunes before they will part with their invaluable freedom. It will give you a happy peace in your own breasts, and secure you the most endeared affection, thanks, and blessing of your posterity; it will gain you the esteem of all true patriots and friends of liberty through the whole realm; yea, and as far as your case is known, it will gain you the esteem and admiration of the whole world.

2. ELISHA WILLIAMS

Elisha Williams might be called the Josiah Quincy of Connecticut. There was the same intellectual vigor in both, and also the same hidden humor. In religion he was a follower of Whitefield, but he was not so hide-bound a Calvinist as Stephen Johnson. Apparently he used his pulpit more frequently to rouse the people against Britain than against the Devil. He was born in Beverly, Mass., in 1757, and was graduated from Yale in 1775. He lived on till 1845.¹ His most celebrated political writing was a pamphlet issued in 1744, entitled, "The Essential Rights and Liberties of Protestants, a Seasonable Plea for Liberty of Conscience and the Right of Private Judgment in matters of Religion, without any control from Human authority." It was signed "Phila-lethes," who is now commonly believed to have been Williams.² It is an

¹ No adequate study of Williams is in print. For the scanty facts about his life used here I am indebted to the brief biographical sketch prefaced to "The Diary of Elisha Williams," edited by W. Hyde Appleton, the first part of which was published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography*. Phila. October, 1924. pp. 334-353.

² For a discussion of the matter of the authorship of the pamphlet see Baldwin, p. 65, note 3.

able work, and unquestionably had a profound influence on the trend of pre-Revolutionary political thinking, but it can hardly be compared with John Wise's "Vindication," as a recent historian has attempted to do.¹ Williams leans heavily upon Locke, and refers to him constantly. His central argument is that "every Man having a natural Right to, or being Propr of his own Person and his own Actions and Labour, which we call property; it certainly follows, that no Man can have a Right to the Person or Property of another: And if every Man has a Right to his Person and Property; he has also a Right to defend them, and a Right to all the necessary Means of Defense, and so has a Right of punishing all Insults upon his Person and Property."² He looked upon all governments that did not depend upon the will of the people for their every act as "absolutely against the Law of God and Nature."³ His reasoning toward this conclusion illustrates very well the type of political thinking current in his time: a combination of French naturalism and English (which is to say, Lockean) rationalism. Says Williams:

Reason teaches us that all Men are naturally equal in Respect of Jurisdiction or Dominion one over another. Altho true it is that Children are not born in this full State of Equality, yet they are born to it. . . . For God having given Man an Understanding to direct his Actions, has given him therewith a Freedom of Will and Liberty of Acting, as properly belonging thereto, within the bounds of that Law he is under: . . . So that we are born Free as we are born Rational. . . . This natural Freedom is not a Liberty for everyone to do what he pleases without any Regard to Law; for a rational Creature cannot but be made under a Law from its Maker: But it consists in a Freedom from any superior Power on Earth, and not being under the Will or legislative Authority of Man, and having only the law of nature (or in other Words, of its Maker) for his Rule. . . .

But because in such a State of Nature, every Man must be Judge of the Breach of the Law of Nature and Executioner too (even in his own case) and the greater Part being no strict Observers of Equity and Justice; the Enjoyment of Property in this State is not very safe. Three Things are wanting in this State (as the celebrated Lock observes) to render them safe; viz. an

¹ Baldwin. p. 66.

² *Op. cit.* p. 3.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 63.

established known Law received and allowed by Common consent, . . . a known and indifferent Judge, . . . [and] a Power to back and support the Sentence when right. . . . Now to remedy these Inconveniencies, Reason teaches Men to join in Society, to unite together into a Commonwealth under some Form or other, to make a Body of Laws agreeable to the Law of Nature, and institute one common Power to see them observed. . . . It is they who thus unite together, viz. the People, who make and alone have Right to make the Laws that are to take Place among them; or which comes to the same Thing, appoint these who shall make them, and who shall see them Executed.

Hence then the Foundation and Original of all civil Power is from the People, and is certainly instituted for their Sakes: . . . The great End of Civil Government, is the Preservation of their Persons, their Liberties and Estates, or their Property.¹

Williams's chief claim to remembrance, however, lies in the diary he kept during the Revolutionary War, which was unearthed by his great-grandson, W. Hyde Appleton, and published for the first time in October, 1924. It is of transcendent historical importance, and full of unconscious humor.²

3. EZRA STILES

The acclaim which some have given to the memory of Ezra Stiles is little short of amazing. Tyler, in his generally excellent "Literary History of the American Revolution," devotes nearly seven pages to him, praises him to the skies for his extensive learning and exemplary religious tolerance,³ and hails him as "one of the wisest, acutest, and noblest men of that period, who did great things in his day for the enlightenment of men and the advancement of civilization."⁴ Chancellor Kent likewise lauded him for his "zeal for civil and religious liberty."⁵ William Ellery Channing went even further. He said:

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 2-5.

² The diary is discussed under the section dealing with the prose and verse of pre-Revolutionary New England.

³ *Op. cit.* Vol. II. p. 336.

⁴ *Op. cit.* Vol. II. p. 335.

⁵ Quoted in "The Pulpit of the American Revolution . . .," by John Wingate Thornton. Boston. 1860. p. 399.

The country has not produced a more learned man. His virtues were proportioned to his intellectual acquisitions. In his faith he was what is called a moderate Calvinist; but his heart was of no sect. . . . He desired to heal the wounds of the divided Church of Christ, not by a common creed, but by the spirit of love. . . . He wished to break every yoke, civil and ecclesiastical, from men's necks. To the influence of this distinguished man in the circle in which I was brought up, I may owe in part the indignation which I feel toward every invasion of human right. In my earliest years I regarded no other human being with equal reverence.¹

The facts, unluckily, do not bear out these commendations. Stiles was a useful man, but far from a great one. The blood of John Wise or Jonathan Mayhew or even John Adams did not run in his veins.

He was born in New Haven, Conn., on December 10, 1727, and was graduated from Yale twenty years later.² From the first his ambition was to know everything, to be called a universal scholar. In the year of his graduation from Yale he wrote: "I consider myself as a citizen of the intellectual world," and on his induction into the presidency of the same college he delivered an oration in Latin on "the encyclopedia of literature." He kept up his quest for learning throughout his life, as his diary shows.³ "He conversed and corresponded in Hebrew, Latin and French with facility, and was learned in Oriental literature and antiquities connected with Biblical history. He taught in astronomy, chemistry and philosophy."⁴ He had an extensive correspondence with prominent citizens in all the Colonies, and with learned men in Europe.

He delivered a Latin oration in 1753 in memory of Dean Berkeley, and another, in 1755, in honor of Benjamin Franklin, whose intimate friendship he enjoyed. He was a minister at Newport, R. I., from 1755 to the beginning of the Revolution, and then he was pastor of the North Church in Portsmouth for a while, but on July 8, 1778,

¹ Quoted *ibid.* p. 400.

² For my biographical information I am indebted to "The Life of Ezra Stiles," by Abiel Holmes. Boston. 1798; and also to the biographical sketch by Thornton, coming immediately before his reprint of Stiles's "The United States elevated to Glory and Honour. . . ." pp. 297-520.

³ Quoted by Holmes. p. 18.

⁴ Thornton. p. 399.

he was made president of Yale, in which post he died on May 12, 1795.¹

Stiles's political writings were very few in number. The most celebrated of them was "A Discourse on the Christian Union: the Substance of which was delivered before the Reverend Convention of the Congregational Clergy in the Colony of Rhode Island, assembled at Bristol, April 23, 1760." The sermon was published in Boston the year following. In 1766 the printer told Stiles "that 7 to 800 copies had been sold, that more had been made out of it than was ever made by any other sermon in Boston, and that it might be readily printed again."² Obviously the sermon was very popular, but it must have been on account of Stiles's ecclesiastical eminence and personal popularity rather than for any exceptional merits in the work. It is mainly a plea for private judgment in religious affairs, and secondarily deals with politics. The colonists of pre-Revolutionary days made little distinction between religion and politics, so closely were the two bound up in the struggle with Great Britain. Stiles's argumentation contains no new ideas, and it is surely not written with especial skill. Neither Tyler nor Baldwin, both of whom confess a great liking for the man, think it of sufficient importance to quote from it more than five or six lines together. Stiles did show a certain perspicacity in predicting the ultimate break of the Colonies, as when in 1774 he wrote to Catherine Macauley the historian: "There will be a Runnymede in America."³ But surely he was not alone in this.

Where Tyler and William Ellery Channing got their idea that Stiles was a great advocate of civil and religious liberty is something of a mystery. True enough, he was in favor of private judgment in religious matters, but that was only on the occasion of his "Christian Union" sermon. Otherwise he had much in common with John Cotton, and even with Cotton Mather. Not one drop of Jonathan Mayhew's blood was in him. He accepted the entire Westminster Confession. "It is greatly to be wished," he said,

that these principles of our common Christianity might be found in general reception among all the churches. . . .

¹ For a discussion of Stiles as President of Yale see "The Old Time College President," by George P. Schmidt. The Columbia University Press. N. Y. 1930. pp. 64, 173, 200.

² Baldwin. p. 70.

³ Quoted in Holmes. p. 180.

The Trinity in unity, in the one undivided essence of the Great Jehovah.

The sacred Scriptures are of divine inspiration. . . .

The second person of the coëternal Trinity, having assumed human nature, made a real atonement for sin, and by his vicarious obedience and sufferings, exhibited that righteousness and vicarious merit by which alone we are forgiven and justified.

The Holy Ghost is equally a divine person with the Father, and the Son, sharing with them divine, supreme, equal and undivided honors. . . .

. . . of these, the doctrines of the divinity of the Lord Jesus and his real vicarious atonement, are the most important—the Jachin and Boaz, the pillar-truths of the gospel, the *articuli stantis et cadentis ecclesia*.¹

Not only did he urge Calvinism upon all the churches; he also urged it upon all public officials. The separation of church and state, for which Jefferson labored so mightily, was an obnoxious thing to him. "After the present period of deism and skeptical indifferentism in religion," he says,

of timidity and irresolution in the cause of the great Emmanuel, perhaps there may arise a succession of civil magistrates who will not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, nor of patronizing his holy religion with a generous catholicism and expanded benevolence toward all of every denomination who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.²

And he adds this strange statement, which even he should have known was grossly inaccurate:

Whenever religion is erected on the ruins of civil government, and when civil government is built on the ruins of religion, both are so far essentially wrong. The church has never been of any

¹ "The United States elevated to Glory and Honour. A Sermon Preached before His Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. LL.D. Governor & Commander in Chief, and the Honourable The General Assembly of The State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford, at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783," by Ezra Stiles, D.D., president of Yale. Reprinted in Thornton. pp. 397-520. This quotation, pp. 493-494.

² *Ibid.* p. 490.

political detriment here, for it has never been vested with any civil or secular power in New England.¹

Stiles's claim to remembrance lies in a totally different direction from his religious or political writings. It lies in the strange diary which he kept throughout the major part of his life. It is of great historical importance, particularly because it contains Franklin's most elaborate statement of his religious beliefs, which he wrote to Stiles in answer to a direct question from him. I discuss it at length in Chapter VII.

¹ "The United States elevated to Glory and Honour. A Sermon Preached before His Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. LL.D. Governor & Commander in Chief, and the Honourable The General Assembly of The State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford, at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783," by Ezra Stiles, D.D., president of Yale. Reprinted in Thornton. pp. 397-520. This quotation, p. 491.

CHAPTER V

Rhode Island

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Rhode Island

RHODE ISLAND WAS ALMOST AS INDEPENDENT BEFORE THE Revolution as Connecticut. It differed, however, in one important respect from it: there was real religious freedom within its borders — except for Quakers.¹ In the field of radical literature it did not produce so much as Massachusetts or Connecticut. Its most celebrated pamphleteer was Stephen Hopkins, whom Tyler, with his usual exaggeration in such matters, calls “gallant and dexterous.”² A close examination of the facts does not bear out this characterization. Hopkins was born in Providence, R. I., on March 6, 1706. In youth he helped his father on the ancestral farm, and later he became a surveyor. He had very little formal education. He was Governor of Rhode Island in the years 1755–64. Before that he had represented his town for many years in the General Assembly. For a time he was a Justice of the Court of Common pleas. He was a leader in the founding of the Providence Library in 1754. In 1751 he was made Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Superior Court, which post he held at the time of his election as Governor in May, 1755. He had

considerable to do with the courts, and with lawsuits; but he had never studied law, in the sense in which this language is used of an educated lawyer in our day. . . . The truth is, that until long after this date, (to quote from Chief-Justice Durfee), “the regular lawyers were few, and must have been imperfectly trained and slenderly equipped.” An elective judiciary was the established practice in the Colony; and in the annual choice of judges the preferences of the citizens lighted now on some active farmer, now on some tradesman who had risen to mercantile prominence in the Town Street, — and at rare intervals, on some thoroughly

¹ The most celebrated example of Rhode Island intolerance was the treatment Roger Williams accorded George Fox. It was a fact, however, that the Colony took less official notice of religious belief than any of its sister Colonies in New England.

² “A Literary History of the American Revolution,” by Tyler. Vol. II. p. 68.

equipped lawyer, like William Ellery or David Howell. The wonder is that these annual choices of the General Assembly resulted so well. . . . "Though not a lawyer," says Judge Durfee, "[Hopkins] was doubtless a good judge."¹

Hopkins did most of his writing for the Providence *Gazette and Country Journal*. But it was his pamphlet, "The Rights of the Colonies Examined," which caused the greatest stir. It was ordered published by the General Assembly of Rhode Island on November 30, 1764. It deals with general political principles.

Liberty is the greatest blessing that men enjoy, and slavery the heaviest curse that human nature is capable of. . . . Absolute liberty is perhaps incompatible with any kind of government. The safety resulting from society, and the advantage of just and equal laws, hath caused men to forego some part of their natural liberty, and submit to government.²

Then he added the expected conclusion: "British subjects are to be governed agreeable to laws to which they themselves have in some way consented."³ All of which was hardly new stuff, nor was it said with exceptional skill. Because of Hopkins's reputation and public standing, however, the pamphlet was widely read. It was reprinted in nearly every other Colony in the New World.⁴ Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts thought that the pamphlet was "conceived in a higher strain than any [memorials] that were sent out by the other Colonies."⁵ Professor Channing thinks the same.⁶ This judgment is too kind. Almost any one of the Massachusetts pamphleteers did better, notably Josiah Quincy and Jonathan Mayhew. The Hopkins work, to be sure, is mild, but it lacks lifting power. The great struggle of the time was beyond the hope of all logical reasoning and calm pleading.

¹ "Stephen Hopkins. A Rhode Island Statesman. A Study in the Political History of the Eighteenth Century," by William E. Foster. The Rhode Island Historical Tracts. First Series. No. 19. Parts I and II. Providence, R. I. 1884. Part I. pp. 151-152. I am indebted to this study for my biographical facts.

² *Op. cit.* pp. 3-4. The substance of the pamphlet was later reprinted in the Providence *Gazette* for December 22, 1764.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 4.

⁴ Foster. Part II. p. 57.

⁵ Quoted by Foster. Part II. p. 68.

⁶ "A History of the United States," by Edward Channing. Vol. III, "The American Revolution, 1761-1789." N. Y. 1924. p. 67: "None states in clearer language the colonial position."

If there is such a thing as historical determinism, in the Spenglerian sense, then surely the America of those days had all the marks of a set battlefield, and the men most in need were fierce mob-orators, tempered by a show of logic, but not obsessed with its mechanics.

Vermont and New Hampshire produced no radical literature of any importance before the Revolution. Both were relatively unsettled at the time. There were few churches within their borders, almost no industries, and hence no "mad mechanics." It was only with the Revolution that the two communities sprang into prominence, Vermont with her celebrated Ethan Allen, and New Hampshire with her noisy College Party.

CHAPTER VI

Ballads and Songs

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Ballads and Songs

IT WAS FORTUNATE, INDEED, AS DR. LORENZO SEARS SAYS, THAT "the success of the patriotic cause did not depend upon the genius of its poets. Still, poor as they were, their songs were popular, and cheered the hearts of yeomen, who won at least in spite of regular troops and irregular verses."¹ These revolutionary ballads and songs, God knows, were bad enough, but they were better than the prose produced in the same period, less pretentious and more to the liking of the common man.

Most of these "poets" will forever remain anonymous. Nearly every company had its "smart one," or jingler, who "beguiled the weariness of the march or the encampment by his minstrelsy, grave or gay."² The productions of all of them recall London broadsides, perhaps, rather than orthodox Scotch ballads, as one historian has suggested.³ But it would be more accurate to call them political sermons written in the heroic couplet of Pope, or in the tetrameter of Butler and Churchill, two styles very popular in England in those days and widely imitated in America. Often, however, the balladists made no conscious use of any specific models, and were content with getting their vigorous emotions on paper.

The ballads were sometimes satirical and sometimes laudatory, and the songs varied much more. The latter were usually written to popular tunes, and were frequently parodies or adaptations of older originals. William Billings, the second native American composer, supplied many of the tunes. He was born in Boston on October 7, 1746, and died in the same city on September 26, 1800. He was a well-known patriot, and though he wrote much verse, was far better known for

¹ "American Literature in the Colonial and National Periods," by Lorenzo Sears. Boston. 1902. p. 138.

² "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution. With Notes and Illustrations," by Frank Moore. N. Y. 1866. p. vi. This is the best collection of revolutionary ballads and songs in print. A more recent, but not so exhaustive, collection is "American Broadside Verse: From Imprints of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," edited by Ola Elizabeth Winslow. The Yale University Press. 1930.

³ "A History of American Literature, 1607-1865," by W. P. Trent. N. Y. 1903. p. 154.

his tunes. "Billings' Singing Master's Assistant," a collection of church music, was in general use in New England during the Revolution.

The amazing thing about the ballad writers was that they missed all the great events that passed before their eyes. There was Lexington, there was Concord, there was the ride of Paul Revere, there was the Boston Tea Party, there was the Stamp Act, there was Nathan Hale's magnificent gesture, there was the final defeat and crushing of the British Army, but the balladists could do no more than compose a jingle about any of them. True enough, no later American poet has risen to any of these themes, but one would have expected the contemporaries at least to have made heroic attempts at them. Consider the Nathan Hale ballad. Here, if ever, was material for truly moving verse. Hale was caught in the act of spying on the British Army. He was sent by Washington himself. He was brought before General Howe, summarily tried, condemned and executed on the same day. The provost-marshal refused him the attendance of a chaplain or the use of a Bible, and destroyed his farewell letters to his sisters and his fiancée before his eyes. What did the balladists do to measure up to the drama of the occasion? They did this:

*The breezes went steadily through the tall pines,
A saying "oh! hu-ush!" a saying "oh! hu-ush!"
As stilly stole by a bold legion of horse,
For Hale in the bush, for Hale in the Bush.*

*"Keep still!" said the thrush as she nestled her young,
In a nest by the road, in a nest by the road;
"For the tyrants are near, and with them appear
What bodes us no good, what bodes us no good."*

*The brave captain heard it, and thought of his home
In a cot by the brook, in a cot by the brook,
With a mother and sister and memories dear
He so gaily forsook, he so gaily forsook.*

*Cooling shades of the night were coming apace,
The tattoo had beat, the tattoo had beat;
The noble one sprang from his dark lurking place,
To make his retreat, to make his retreat.*

. . .

*The guards of the camp on that dark dreary night,
Had a murderous will, had a murderous will;
They took him and bore him afar from the shore,
To a hut on the hill, to a hut on the hill.*

*No mother was there, nor a friend who could cheer,
In that little stone cell, in that little stone cell;
But he trusted in love from his Father above—
In his heart all was well.*

. . .

*They took him and bound him and bore him away,
Down the hill's grassy side, down the hill's grassy side:
'Twas there the base hirelings in royal array,
His cause did deride, his cause did deride.*

*Five minutes were given, short minutes, no more,
For him to repent, for him to repent;
He prayed for his mother—he asked not another—
To Heaven, to Heaven he went.*

*The fate of a martyr the tragedy shewed,
As he trod the last stage, as he trod the last stage;
And Britons will shudder at gallant Hale's blood,
As his words do presage, as his words do presage:—*

*"Thou pale king of terrors, thou life's gloomy foe,
Go frighten the slave, go frighten the slave;
Tell Tyrants, to you their allegiance they owe—
No fears for the brave, no fears for the brave."¹*

Of all the Revolutionary ballads the best was unquestionably "An Ode to Liberty," which, curiously enough, neither Tyler, nor Trent, nor Wendell, nor Cairns, nor Sears, nor "The Cambridge History of American Literature" mentions. It is immeasurably more eloquent than "Hale in the Bush," which Tyler puts at the top of the list.²

¹ Moore. pp. 131-133. William B. Cairns, in "A History of American Literature," N. Y., 1930, revised edition, speaks of this "Hale in the Bush" ballad as possessing "a genuine poetic quality." p. 121. Tyler, in Vol. II, p. 184, says the same.

² Tyler. Vol. II. p. 184.

There are a ring and a swing to it that no other patriotic poem of the time attained. It is surely no masterpiece, but it is not only the most effective of all Revolutionary poems discovered to date; it is also the best poem of any kind written at the time. The author is unknown. It was contributed to Boston and New York newspapers about Christmas time, 1773, by "Philo-Patria." Later it was issued as a broadside, dated Newport, R. I., July 20, 1775.

AN ODE TO LIBERTY

Fair liberty! celebrated goddess, hail!

*Parent of virtue, ease and opulence,
Array'd in all matchless charms, descend,
Descend, and bless our land.*

Let thy protecting influence

O'er all thy sons prevail

*Inspire each breast with patriot love,
And all our glorious rights defend.*

*Come from thy native seats above,
In person come, and here erect thy throne;
Thy throne coeval with the world shall stand,
And vile oppression vanish at thy frown.*

*Justice o'er all thy councils shall preside,
And truth shall be a never failing guide,
Corruption in thy courts shall ne'er appear,
T'extort from injur'd honesty a tear—
The bread industry earns, itself shall eat,
Not snatched away to pamper knaves of state:
No fawning parasites thy gates admit,
That viper brood its thriftless trade must quit.
No pension'd knaves shall view with scornful eye,
The slaves below, whose labors they enjoy.
No wretch his country shall betray for gain;
But virtue, peace and plenty, crown thy reign.*

*Lo! base deceit, advancing with a smile,
With specious arts she gilds the fatal bait,
Wears friendship's mask, the better to beguile,
And aims a sly but deadly shaft at all.*

*Beware her treach'rous smiles, beware,
 Come not within the dang'rous snare;
 Hear Freedom's voice, attend her glorious call!
 And shun the precipice before too late.
 See Slavery her steps pursuing close,
 She treads upon her heels,
 Anticipates the promis'd poignant joy,
 And clanks her horrid chains!
 Americans, so long her foes,
 She hopes at length will yield.*

*Has virtue then resign'd the reins?
 Must Freedom quit the field?
 Than live a slave, 'tis better for to die:
 This truth who does not feel?
 Beware those treach'rous arts, beware,
 Come not within the dang'rous snare:
 Hear Freedom's voice — attend her glorious call —
 Resign your freedom — you resign your all.*

*Lo! Heaven-born Truth, her shining torch applies,
 The Monster's stript of all her false disguise,
 The hideous spectre see!
 See what a train of ills succeed!
 Oppression rears her hydra-head —
 Injustice, Rapine, in the front appear,
 And meagre Want comes stalking in the rear!*

*Be bold! and in the general cause unite,
 To Truth's seraphic voice attend;
 In spite of knaves — in vain ambition's spite —
 Dare to be free!
 Freedom and Virtue have one common grave,
 And these what honest man would e'er survive?
 Who'd dare to live, must dare to be a knave,
 For knaves alone could then expect to thrive.¹*

The Stamp Act naturally brought forth much versifying. But the only printable piece was by Peter St. John, a native of Norwalk, Conn.

¹ "Illustrated Ballad History of the American Revolution, 1765-1783," by Frank Moore. N. Y. 1876. pp. 343-345.

During the war he kept a school in his home town. His broadside was entitled "American Taxation." Mr. Moore, the most eminent authority on Revolutionary ballads, thought it was "excellent,"¹ but that was an amiable exaggeration. Note the strange rhyme in it: *America* and—*ay*.

AMERICAN TAXATION

*While I relate my story,
Americans give ear;
Of Britain's fading glory
You presently shall hear;*

*I'll give a true relation,
Attend to what I say
Concerning the taxation
Of North America.*

*The cruel lords of Britain,
Who glory in their shame,
The project they have hit on
They joyfully proclaim;
'Tis what they're striving after
Our right to take away,
And rob us of our charter
In North America.*

*O George! you are distracted,
You'll by experience find
The laws you have enacted
Are of the blackest kind.
I'll make a short digression,
And tell you by the way,
We fear not your oppression,
In North America.*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution. With Notes and Illustrations," by Frank Moore. N. Y. 1861. p. 1.

*Our fathers were distressèd,
While in their native land;
By tyrants were oppressèd
As we do understand;
For freedom and religion
They were resolved to stray
And trace the desert regions
Of North America.*

. . .

*We never will knock under,
O, George! we do not fear
The rattling of your thunder,
Nor lightning of your spear:
Though rebels you declare us,
We're strangers to dismay;
Therefore you cannot scare us
In North America.*

*To what you have commanded
We never will consent,
Although your troops are landed
Upon our continent;
We'll take our swords and muskets,
And march in dread array,
And drive the British red-coats
From North America.*

*We have a bold commander,
Who fears not sword or gun
The second Alexander,
His name is Washington.
His men are all collected,
And ready for the fray,
To fight they are directed
For North America.*

. . .

*Proud George, you are engaged
 All in a dirty cause,
 A cruel war have waged
 Repugnant to all laws.
 Go tell the savage nations
 You're crueler than they,
 To fight your own relations
 In North America. . . .¹*

In 1768 the merchants of Boston resolved not to import anything from Great Britain until the act imposing duties upon all such articles should be repealed. But there were the women to consider, the best customers of the imported linens and teas. So an anonymous appeal was made to their patriotism, in the same year, in the *Boston News-Letter*.

TO OUR LADIES

*Young ladies in town, and those that live round,
 Let a friend at this season advise you;
 Since money's so scarce, and times growing worse,
 Strange things may soon hap and surprise you.*

*First, then, throw aside your topknots of pride;
 Wear none but your own country linen;
 Of economy boast, let your pride be the most
 To show clothes of your own make and spinning.*

*What if homespun they say is not quite so gay
 As brocades, yet be not in a passion,
 For when once it is known this is much worn in town,
 One and all will cry out—'Tis the fashion!*

*And, as one, all agree, that you'll not married be
 To such as will wear London factory,
 But at first sight refuse, tell 'em such you will choose
 As encourage our own manufactory.*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution. With Notes and Illustrations." Moore. pp. 1-5.

*No more ribbons wear, nor in rich silks appear;
 Love your country much better than fine things;
 Begin without passion, 'twill soon be the fashion
 To grace your smooth locks with a twine string.*

*Throw aside your Bohea, and your Green Hyson tea,
 And all things with a new-fashion duty;
 Procure a good store of the choice Labrador,
 For there'll soon be enough here to suit you.*

*These do without fear, and to all you'll appear,
 Fair, charming, true, lovely and clever;
 Though the times remain darkish, young men may be sparkish,
 And love you much stronger than ever.*

*Then make yourselves easy, for no one will teaze ye,
 Nor tax you, if chancing to sneer
 At the sense-ridden tools, who think us all fools;
 But they'll find the reverse far and near.¹*

The following ballad has been attributed to Meshech Weare, who was president of New Hampshire during the greater part of the Revolutionary period. It first appeared in *Fowle's Gazette*, in the issue for July 22, 1774, and was later adapted to a sacred air and published as a broadside. Weare was born in 1714 in Boston, was graduated from Harvard twenty-one years later, and died in Hampton Falls in 1786.

INDIA TEA

*Rouse every generous thoughtful mind,
 The rising danger flee,
 If you would lasting freedom find,
 Now then abandon tea.*

*Scorn to be bound with golden chains,
 Though they allure the sight;
 Bid them defiance, if they claim
 Our freedom and birth-right.*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 48-50.

*Shall we our freedom give away,
And all our comfort place
In drinking of outlandish tea,
Only to please our taste?*

*Forbid it Heaven, let us be wise,
And seek our country's good;
Nor ever let a thought arise,
That tea should be our food.*

*Since we so great a plenty have,
Of all that's for our health;
Shall we that blasted herb receive,
Impoverishing our wealth?*

. . .

*Adieu! away, oh tea! begone!
Salute our taste no more;
Though thou art coveted by some
Who're destined to be poor.¹*

The Revolutionary parodies were particularly feeble, but one or two of them bears reprinting. The following parody of "Banks of the Dee" has been attributed to Oliver Arnold, a popular wit of Norwich, Conn. It appeared as a broadside some time in 1775.

BANKS OF THE DEE

*Tw'as winter, and blue tory noses were freezing,
As they march'd o'er the land where they ought not to be;
The valiants complain'd at the fifer's cursed wheezing,
And wish'd they'd remain'd on the banks of the Dee.
Lead on thou paid captain! tramp on thou proud minions!
Thy ranks, basest men, shall be strung like ripe onions,
For here thou hast found heads with warlike opinions,
On the shoulders of nobles who ne'er saw the Dee.*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution. With Notes and Illustrations." Moore. pp. 62-64.

*Prepare for war's conflict; or make preparation
For peace with the rebels, for they're brave and glee;
Keep mindful of dying, and leave the foul nation
That sends on its armies to brag and to flee.
Make haste, now, and leave us them miscreant tories!
To Scotland repair! there court the sad houris,
And listen once more to their plaints and their stories
Concerning the "glory and pride of the Dee."*

*Be quiet and sober, secure and contented:
Upon your own land, be valiant and free;
Bless God, that the war is so nicely prevented,
And till the green fields on the banks of the Dee.
The Dee then will flow, all its beauty displaying,
The lads on its banks will again be seen playing,
And England thus honestly taxes defraying,
With natural drafts from the banks of the Dee.¹*

For some reason or other fewer Revolutionary songs have survived than either ballads or hymns. Maybe the reason is to be found in the well-known masculine character of most Army chorales. The following song, it is assumed, was probably written by Benjamin Dearborn in 1776. Dearborn was the printer of the *Freeman's Journal, or New Hampshire Gazette*, published at Portsmouth. The *Journal* was the *Boston Gazette* of the White Mountain State.

WAR SONG

*Hark, hark, the sound of war is heard,
And we must all attend;
Take up our arms and go with speed,
Our country to defend.*

*Our parent state has turned our foe,
Which fills our land with pain;
Her gallant ships, manned out for war,
Come thundering o'er the main.*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 81-82.

*There's Carleton, Howe, and Clinton too.
And many thousands more,
May cross the sea, but all in vain,
Our rights we'll ne'er give o'er.*

*Our pleasant homes they do invade,
Our property devour;
And all because we won't submit
To their despotic power.*

*Then let us go against our foe,
We'd better die than yield;
We and our sons are all undone,
If Britain wins the field.*

*Tories may dream of future joys,
But I am bold to say,
They'll find themselves bound fast in chains,
If Britain wins the day.*

*Husbands must leave their loving wives,
And sprightly youths attend,
Leave their sweethearts and risk their lives,
Their country to defend.
May there be heroes in the field,
Have heroes' fame in store;
We pray the Lord to be their shield,
Where thundering cannons roar.¹*

There were plenty of "fair-minded" people during the War of Rebellion, who saw good on both sides, and who tried to have the two opposing camps "reason things out together as brother and brother." They also wrote poems. The following, by one of the tribe, is the only one at all worth printing.

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution. With Notes and Illustrations." Moore. pp. 115-117.

COMMON PRAYER FOR THE TIMES

*Since we are taught in Scripture word
To pray for friends and foes;
Then let us pray for George the Third,
Who must be one of those.*

*Heaven bless America, and Britain,
May folly past suffice,
Wherein they have each other smitten,
Who ought to harmonize.*

*Allied by blood, and interest too,
Soon let them re-unite,
May Heaven tyrannic minds subdue,
Haste, haste the pleasing sight.*

*May ev'ry morn and evening prayer
Repeat this just petition,
What thinking Christian can forbear,
Appris'd of our condition.*

*Britannia's sins are our worst foes,
Let this be Britain's creed,
For those who God and man oppose,
Must rebels be indeed.*

*This rebel-host how num'rous grow!
This growth kind Heaven forbid!
'Tis fear'd some are too near the throne,
And seem securely hid.*

*Just Heaven, to light all rebels bring,
Who hate or love the steeple.
Rebels to God, and to the king,
And rebels to the people.¹*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 126-127.

With the coming of actual conflict the radical periodicals fairly blossomed with verses. But the best of the lot, such as it was, was printed in the *Freeman's Journal or New Hampshire Gazette* about one month before the Declaration of Independence.

INDEPENDENCE

*Freemen! if you pant for glory,
If you sigh to live in story,
If you burn with patriot zeal;
Seize this bright auspicious hour,
Chase those venal tools of power,
Who subvert the public weal.*

*Huzza! Huzza! Huzza!
See Freedom her banner display,
Whilst glory and virtue your bosoms inspire,
Corruption's proud slaves shall with anguish retire.*

*Would traitors base with bribes beguile you,
Or with idiot scoffs revile you,
Ne'er your sacred trusts betray;
Hancock, Adams, nobly pleading,
Never from the truth receding,
Them, North's vengeance can't dismay.*

*See, their glorious path pursuing,
All Britannia's trop subduing,
Patriots whom no threats restrain.
Lawless tyrants all confounding,
Future times their praise resounding,
Shall their triumphs long maintain.¹*

The most popular writer of patriotic songs and ballads in New Hampshire was Dr. Jonathan Mitchell Sewall. He was born in New Hampshire in 1749, but at an early age was adopted by his uncle,

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution. With Notes and Illustrations." Moore. pp. 139-140.

Chief Justice Sewall of Massachusetts. He studied law for a while, and in 1774 was Register of Probate for Grafton county, N. H. He died in 1808. Why he was popular is something of a mystery. His verses were quite bad even for those days. A specimen follows. It appeared some time in 1776.

ON INDEPENDENCE

*Come all you brave soldiers, both valiant and free,
It's for independence we all now agree;
Let us gird on our swords, and prepare to defend,
Our Liberty, property, ourselves and our friends.*

*In a cause that's so righteous, come let us agree,
And from hostile invaders set America free,
The cause is so glorious we need not to fear;
But from merciless tyrants we'll set ourselves clear.*

*Heaven's blessings attending us, no tyrant shall say,
That America e'er to such monsters gave way,
But fighting we'll die in America's cause,
Before we'll submit to tyrannical laws.*

*George the Third, of Great Britain, no more shall he reign,
With unlimited sway o'er these free States again,
Lord North, nor old Bute, nor none of their clan,
Shall ever be honor'd by an American.*

*May Heaven smile on us in all our endeavors,
Safe guard our seaports, our towns, and our rivers,
Keep us from invaders by land and sea,
And from all who'd deprive us of our liberty.¹*

William Billings, the Massachusetts composer, as has been said, supplied many of the tunes for the Revolutionary songs. But occasionally he also wrote some verse of his own, and it was not much in-

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 144-146.

ferior to the prevailing quality. The following sample was published as a broadside in Boston in 1778.

A HYMN

*Let tyrants shake their iron rod,
And slavery clank her galling chains;
We fear them not; we trust in God—
New England's God forever reigns.*

*Howe and Burgoyne, and Clinton, too,
With Prescott and Cornwallis join'd;
Together plot our overthrow,
In one infernal league combin'd.*

*When God inspir'd us for the fight,
Their ranks were broke, their lines were forc'd;
Their ships were shattered in our sight,
Or swiftly driven from our coast.*

*The foe comes on with haughty stride;
Our troops advance with martial noise;
Their veterans flee before our youth,
And generals yield to beardless boys.*

*What grateful offering shall we bring?
What shall we render to the Lord?
Loud hallelujahs let us sing,
And praise his name on every chord.¹*

The best critical comment on the productions of the ballad writers was made by one of them. Ignoring completely their poetical content, he said of his verses and of those of his colleagues that they were written "from a great desire to state the truth, and their opinion of it, in a quiet way, [and] just set their poetical lathes a-turning, and twisted out ballads and songs for the good of the common cause."²

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution. With Notes and Illustrations." Moore. pp. 241-242.

² Quoted *ibid.* p. vi.

CHAPTER VII

Verse and Prose in Connecticut: 1775-1810

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Verse and Prose in Connecticut: 1775-1810

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION: THE HARTFORD WITS

THE BELLES-LETTRES PRODUCED IN THE UNITED STATES IMMEDIATELY before, and during the thirty-five years after, the Revolution were of a very modest quality. Not one poem of the time, and not one piece of non-political prose writing, is read today, or has any just claims for being read. The national genius apparently was ripe only for political writing, and it was in the latter alone that the Revolutionary Americans shone. The Declaration of Independence and the *Federalist* will always be remembered. "M'Fin-gal" and "The Columbiad" are already forgotten.

But considerable scribbling was being done, and much of it was ambitious in both scope and purpose. The literary headquarters, however, had shifted from Massachusetts to Connecticut, or, to be more specific, from Boston and Providence to Hartford and New Haven. Harvard went into temporary eclipse, and Yale sprang to the fore as the cultural centre of America. The reasons for the change are partly to be found in the religious, economic, and political differences between the two Colonies. Harvard, because of the inroads which had lately been made into it by religious liberalism, was on the defensive, and was thus wary of literary "trifling." During the Revolution Boston probably suffered more than any other city in New England, and at its conclusion its people were more interested in rehabilitating the town than in the composition of literature. They had been more fierce in the political controversy than others, and perhaps had expended themselves for the time being.

Connecticut, on the other hand, was off centre in the entire struggle. To be sure, it had produced its quota of radical preachers and pamphleteers, but they were of a very urbane sort, compared to the Bostonians. Few battles had been waged within the Colony limits, and the war left the residents with few real losses on their hands, and with much to look forward to. The rich Connecticut valley was left intact,

and the capitalists were already active in exploiting it to the limit. The orthodoxy of Yale was unquestioned. Under the presidency of Timothy Dwight, it not only surpassed Harvard in enrollment, but replaced it as the educational centre of the New World. "With this worldly prosperity and the feeling of certainty regarding religious affairs came leisure for polite literature and a disposition to uphold vested interests, and to look with suspicion upon all radicalism."¹

The ideology of the Hartford Wits thus becomes readily explainable. All of them, with one exception—John Trumbull, Timothy Dwight, Daniel Humphreys, Lemuel Hopkins, and Richard Alsop—were extremely conservative in their religion and in their politics. They saw nothing good in the French Revolution, and looked upon such men as Hume and Voltaire as the scourge of the world. One of their pet hatreds was the theatre. Not only could they see no good in it; the mere fact that a person was in favor of it was, in their eyes, a sure sign that he was himself depraved and unfit for the society of Christians. Timothy Dwight's celebrated sermon, "On the Stage," probably did more to discourage dramatic art in the United States than any other single writing in all American literature. Were he alive today, nothing would probably give him more anguish than the department of dramatic literature at Yale, recently founded by Professor George P. Baker, formerly of Harvard. The one exception aforementioned was Joel Barlow. He was well acquainted with French literature and French philosophy, and respected both. He was tolerant, and though a Puritan in his æsthetic principles, was very catholic in his tastes. But his reformation was probably due primarily to his seventeen years in Europe, of which he spent nearly five in Paris.

During the time of the actual Revolution very little was written in the field of *belles-lettres*, save songs and ballads. But with the coming of political independence came the feeling that America could achieve artistic independence as well, especially in the world of literature. So there ensued a mad rush throughout the country to create at once a national body of letters at least as good as that of Great Britain. The Hartford Wits, naturally, were in the lead in this noble effort. Three of them, John Trumbull, Joel Barlow, and Timothy Dwight, immediately set to hatching epics, and Dwight was so confident of his "The Conquest of Canaan" that, in his preface to it, he shamelessly compared it to the Iliad and the Æneid!

¹ "A History of American Literature," by William B. Cairns. N. Y. 1930. Revised edition. p. 124.

The worth of all this writing was negligible. The English critics, particularly Southey and Cowper, seem to have taken it seriously, but whether they were in earnest or not, they were surely wrong. The most charitable thing that can be said about the work of the Hartford Wits is that it was ambitious; otherwise it was preposterous. The diligence with which they tried to imitate the *Spectator* and Pope was the height of pathos. Not one of them had the slightest conception of what *belles-lettres* signifies. They missed completely the urbanity of Addison, and were attracted only by his occasional banter. The lush humor of Sterne passed them by altogether.

They were really over-educated Anne Bradstreets. They were well read in the classics, in Biblical literature, and in Pope, Butler and Churchill. Their eagerness for knowledge was almost incredible. Trumbull had read the Bible twice before he was four, and by the time he was seven he had gone all through Cicero, Virgil, Lilly, Pope and God knows whom else. Dwight was so busy filling his mind with information that he cut down his eating time to twelve mouthfuls a meal. But of what good was it all when Barlow felt impelled to lambast Homer in his preface to "The Columbiad" for his lack of good morals, and to say of him that his "existence had really proved one of the signal misfortunes of mankind." ?¹

Whether or not the Hartford Wits had an influence on American literature is doubtful. If they did it was merely to warn their successors not to do what they had done. The so-called humor of Trumbull died with him. His epic, and those of Dwight and Barlow, fortunately stand alone in the history of American letters. The artistic instinct of the later poets was far sounder than the critical judgments of Southey and Cowper. This is not to say that Longfellow and Whittier and their colleagues were faultlessly self-critical, but "Evangeline" and "Snow-Bound" are at least shorter than "The Columbiad" and "The Conquest of Canaan." When considering the history of American literature, brevity is not a virtue to be despised.

There was one product of the Hartford Wits which, I venture to say, is destined for a long life. All of the literary historians have passed it by, including the diligent Tyler. It did not see the light of day till 1886, when it was first published by Charles Burr Todd, the biographer of Joel Barlow. I refer to Barlow's letter to his wife from Algiers, dated July 8, 1796, which was to be delivered to her only in

¹ "The Columbiad, A Poem. With the Last Corrections of the Author," by Joel Barlow. Paris. 1813. p. ix.

case of his death from the plague. He was then American minister to Algiers. His wife was temporarily living in Paris. It is one of the most beautiful documents of its kind ever put on paper. There are a tenderness and a consideration in it that would grace an old-time saint. Abigail Adams would have loved Barlow forever had she seen the letter, had she known he was capable of it. How the same man who wrote "The Columbiad" could have written it is for the psychoanalysts to determine.

2. JOHN TRUMBULL

John Trumbull, perhaps the most popular of the Hartford Wits, came of a distinguished Connecticut family.¹ He was born on April 13 (old style, or April 24, new style), 1750, in the parish of Westbury, then a part of Waterbury, in New Haven county. His father, the first minister of the Congregational church there, was for many years a trustee of Yale College. John was an only son, and very delicate and sickly. His mother was a highly educated woman, and did much to arouse his taste for learning. "In the records of intellectual precocity," as Tyler has said, "scarcely anything can be cited more remarkable than some of the things that are recorded of this amazing little creature at a period of life when ordinary mortals are sufficiently employed in absorbing and digesting a lacteal diet and in getting forward with their primary set of teeth."²

When he was two years old he began to learn to read and write, and in six months he could read with high competence. Sometime before he had reached the great age of two he could recite by heart all the verses in the New England Primer and all of Watts's "Divine Songs for Children." Before the age of four he had read the entire Bible. Before he was five, to the utter dismay of his parents, he had learned one-half of Lilly's Latin Grammar. In the next two years he read everything he could get hold of in his father's library, and by

¹ For my biographical information I rely mainly on the unsigned memoir prefaced to Vol. I of "The Poetical Works of John Trumbull, LL.D. Containing M'Fingal, A Modern Epic Poem, Revised and Corrected, With Copious Explanatory Notes; The Progress of Dulness; and A Collection of Poems on Various Subjects, Written Before and During the Revolutionary Period. In Two Volumes." Hartford. 1820.

² "A Literary History of the American Revolution." Vol. I. p. 189. Mr. Tyler's study of Trumbull is the longest ever made. There is biographical material in it that is not to be obtained elsewhere. He had access to documents which have since been lost or forbidden to public scrutiny.

the time he was seven he felt ready to take the entrance examinations to Yale. The requirements for admission to Yale at the time were these: "Admissionem in hoc Collegium Nemo expectet, nisi qui e Præsidis et Tutorum Examine, Tullium, Virgilium et Testamentum Græcum extempore legere, ad Unguem redere, ac grammaticæ resolvere, et Prosa veram Latinitatem scribere potuerit; et Prosodiæ ac Arithmetices vulgaris Regulas perdidicerit: atque Testimonium idoneum de Vita ac Moribus inculpatis exhibuerit."¹

Young John "passed a good Examination." But his father did not allow him to enter, and he spent the six following years in brushing up on his Greek and Latin, and also doing considerable study in English literature. He read more deeply in Homer, Horace and Cicero. At the age of eight he tackled "Paradise Lost," Thomson's "Seasons," and the *Spectator*. His memory was almost incredibly quick and tenacious. "Thus, when nine years old, he attempted under such stimulus [for a wager] to commit to memory in a quarter of an hour the Hungarian version of the Lord's Prayer, as given in Salmon's 'Geographical and Historical Grammar.' He more than won the bet; for, after learning the Lord's Prayer in the Hungarian language, he had time enough left over to learn it in the Malabar also; and both versions he retained in memory as late as twenty-nine years afterward, when he repeated one of them to President Stiles."²

He entered Yale in 1763, at the age of thirteen, and was graduated in 1767. He stayed on till 1770, when he was given his master's. While in college he read, in some cases for the second or third time, "all the Greek and Latin classics, especially the poets and orators." He also wrote considerable verse, in which he tried to imitate Milton, Thomson, Dryden and Pope. At Yale he also first became acquainted with Timothy Dwight of Hartford Wit fame. Both of them were poets, and thus rebelled at the high place given at the college to mathematics, logic and scholastic theology, and the neglect which was accorded literature. They fought this scheme of things with satire in the student press and in the New Haven newspapers, and soon enlisted the aid of many of their fellows, "and a material change was eventually effected in the tastes and pursuits of the students."³

In 1769 he began the publication of a series of essays in the manner

¹ Quoted by Tyler. Vol. I. p. 191.

² Tyler. Vol. I. p. 192.

³ Unsigned preface to 1820 edition of his poetry. p. 12.

of the *Spectator* in the *Boston Chronicle*. In the first issue, for September 4-7, he gives the following as his purpose:

"My essays are chiefly designed for the entertainment of those who have some acquaintance with polite literature; but among the various subjects I shall discuss, I hope every person may find something of humor, instruction, or amusement, that will repay the trouble of a perusal. In the meantime, I think myself well employed in contributing my assistance (how trifling soever it may be), towards instructing the ignorant, diverting and improving the learned, rectifying the tastes and manners of the time, and cultivating the fine arts in this land."

Trumbull's wit was not particularly brilliant. A sample follows:

ADVERTISEMENT

To Be Sold At Public Vendue

The Whole Estate of
Isabella Sprightly, Toast and Coquette
(Now retiring from Business)

Imprimis, all the Tools and Utensils, necessary for carrying on the Trade, viz. Several bundles of Darts and Arrows, well-pointed, and capable of doing great execution; A considerable quantity of Patches, Paint, Brushes, and Cosmetics, for plastering, painting and whitewashing the face; a complete set of caps, "a la mode a Paris," of all sizes from five to fifteen inches in height; With several dozen of Cupids, very proper to be stationed on a ruby lip, a diamond eye, or a roseate cheek.

Item, as she proposes by certain ceremonies to transform one of her humble servants into a husband, and keep him for her own use, she offers for sale, Florio, Daphnis, Cynthio, and Cleanthes, with several others, whom she won by a constant attendance on business during the space of four years. She can prove her indisputable right thus to dispose of them, by certain deeds of gift, bills of sale, and attestations, vulgarly called love-letters, under their own hands and seals. They will be offered very cheap, for they are all of them either broken-hearted, consumptive, or in a dying condition. Nay, some of them have been dead this half year, as they declare and testify in the above-mentioned writings.

N. B. Their hearts will be sold separately.¹

¹ Quoted by Tyler. Vol. I. p. 197.

About 1765 Yale was very unpopular among many of the inhabitants of the Colony. The trustees of the college claimed to be completely independent of the political authorities, and were charged with illiberality toward all denominations except their own. The dissatisfied civilians encouraged the students to rebel, and soon the upper classmen asked the trustees to dismiss all the instructors. The latter resigned and the student body was dispersed in 1766. After Commencement that year, held in September, President Thomas Clap resigned, and the professor of theology was made president *pro tempore*. Three new instructors were appointed. They encouraged the study of English grammar and language, and also of composition and oratory, but the pursuit of literature was still haphazard at the college.

In 1769 Joseph Howe was made a tutor. He was a good classical scholar, and had a fair taste in literary matters. He was also a poet. Soon "a relish for polite literature became general among the students."¹ In 1771 all the tutors, except Howe, resigned. So Trumbull and Dwight were chosen to fill the vacancies. Everything was then set for the Yale School of Poets, or, the Hartford Wits. In 1772 Trumbull published the first part of "The Progress of Dulness," the aim of which was to expose the absurd methods in education then prevalent. He completed it the next year, when he added the second and third parts. Timothy Dwight was in the meantime at work upon his epic, "The Conquest of Canaan." And David Humphreys and Joel Barlow had come to the university to join Howe, Trumbull and Dwight in the crusade to put literature on the map at Yale.

After obtaining his master's degree Trumbull spent some time in the study of law, which he hoped to make his profession and chief occupation for the remainder of his life. He then held out small hope of ever being able to make any money out of the writing of poems or satirical essays. He was admitted to the Connecticut bar in 1773, but he immediately went to Boston to study in the office of John Adams. He lodged with Thomas Cushing, then Speaker of the House and later Lieutenant-Governor of the State. Trumbull was thus in the center of American politics, and he could not resist the temptation to write about it. He contributed a number of anonymous political essays to the Boston radical press, and also "An Elegy on the Times:

¹ Unsigned preface to 1820 edition of Trumbull's poetry. p. 14.

Composed at Boston during the operation of the Port Bill," August, 1774.

In November of the same year he returned to New Haven, and commenced to practise at the bar there. A year later he had the first part of "M'Fingal" in fair shape, and a year after that he married a Miss Sarah Hubbard. At the time of the capture of Cornwallis Trumbull's friends urged him to finish "M'Fingal." The first edition of the whole poem was published in Hartford, 1782. "As no author, at that period, was entitled by law to the copyright of his productions, the work soon became the prey of every bookseller and printer, who chose to appropriate it to his own benefit. Among more than thirty different impressions, one only, at any subsequent time, was published with the permission, or even the knowledge of the writer; and the poem remained the property of newsmongers, hawkers, pedlars and petty chapmen."¹

After the peace of 1783 the United States was left without any efficient central government. The country was held together only by the loose Articles of Confederation. Each State was really an independent sovereignty. The officers in the Army of Revolution were very unpopular, "on account of the extra pay for five years, granted them by Congress in lieu of half pay for life, which was first stipulated. Their remaining in combination by forming the Society of Cincinnati was also a subject of general jealousy and clamor."² The country was very poor, the debts of war were staring all in the face, "and almost every individual believed that he had already paid and suffered more than his just proportion of the public expense."³ In Connecticut mobs collected everywhere to prevent officers from getting their pensions. A convention was called to start a revolution in the State, and the people probably would have gone through with it if it had not been for the crushing of Shays's Rebellion in Massachusetts. The adoption of the Federal Constitution put an end to all such things—until the Civil War.

Meanwhile many literati congregated in Hartford, and there was much scribbling in the town. There soon appeared a series of articles under the general title, "American Antiquities," in the gazettes of Hartford and New Haven. They purported to tell the story of newly discovered Indian ruins—the subject was then in the public prints. The authors—Trumbull, Barlow, Humphreys, and Dr. Lemuel Hop-

¹ Unsigned preface to 1820 edition of Trumbull's poetry. pp. 18-19.

² *Ibid.* p. 19.

³ *Ibid.* p. 19.

kins — created the fiction of the discovery, in the ruins, of an ancient heroic poem in English, bearing the title, "The Anarchiad." Humphreys, the prospector of the design, had seen in England a similar associates. These essays in verse, prefaced by prose explanatory notes, "were supposed at the time, to have had considerable influence on the public taste and opinions; and by the boldness of their satire, to have checked and intimidated the leaders of disorganization and infidel philosophy."¹

In 1789 Trumbull was appointed what would now be called district attorney for Hartford, and in 1792 he represented the town in the State Legislature. In 1801 he was made a Judge of the Superior Court of Connecticut, and seven years later was appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of Errors. He held the latter post till 1825, when the last stages of tuberculosis, from which he had suffered for almost twenty-five years, forced him to move to Detroit, then considered a health resort. He died there on May 10, 1831.

Trumbull began his literary life as a satirist, and ended it as such. In February, 1770, he began publishing in the *Connecticut Journal and New Haven Post-Boy* a series of essays after the manner of the *Spectator*, and entitled "The Correspondent." The first paper appeared in the issue for February 23 and the last appeared in that for July 7 of that year. His aim throughout was to satirize "the whims of dogmatical enthusiasts," and for a boy of twenty he did fairly well. He parodied the very titles of the books then popular. As witness:

Creeds and Catechisms Made and Mended by D. D. & Company:
Being the Substance of many Treatises that have lately made a
Noise in the World.

The Art of Quarreling: Being a Curious and entertaining His-
tory of Some Late Transactions.

An Essay on Dancing; Proving from the Examples of King
David and others that it is a most grievous Iniquity, and directly
contrary to the Eternal Fitness of Things. By the Pious —

An Easy and Compendious Method of becoming a Great Man;
With a few Hints on the Art of Climbing.

The Art of Second-Sight, Shewing an Infallible Method of Dis-
covering any Person's Character, Principles, Practices, State of
Body and Soul, future Happiness or Misery, &c.; far Superior to

¹ *Ibid.* p. 22.

Palmistry, Astrology, or any other Method of Fortune-telling: First introduced by a renowned Stage Player, and since brought to Perfection by the united Labors of a certain Set of Philosophers.

Trumbull also made fun of the preposterous title-pages in vogue in his time. To aspiring literati he gave the following advice:

As to the decorations of your book, be sure to frame a very pompous title; for I can assure you there is much virtue in a title-page, and I have often known it, when duly managed, to contain all the wit and the greatest part of the arguments in the book. If you choose to answer some former writer, it may not be amiss to advertize him in the newspaper, after this manner:

Now in the Press
and will speedily be published
A VINDICATION OF TRUE RELIGION
From the Cavils of Ignorance and Heresy
Being an Answer to the remarks of
The Rev'd Duns Scotus

Wherein is clearly proved that the Remarker is clearly unacquainted with the true Spirit of the Gospel, that he hath wholly mistaken the subject of controversy, and hath been guilty of the most palpable blunders and absurdities: Concluding with a Catalogue of his Contradictions, and an Appendix shewing the coincidence of his opinions with those of Hobbes, Spinoza, and the Atheists and Deists in all ages.¹

Trumbull then tackled the philosophers with an essay entitled, "A New System of Logic." Its two chief principles were these:

First, That the common sense and reason of mankind is so weak and fallacious a guide, that its dictates ought never to be regarded; Secondly, That nevertheless nothing is so great that it can surpass, or so perplexing that it can entangle, the understanding of a true metaphysician. . . .

I take these points to be so nearly self-evident that although I can say very little in proof of them, the reader ought for this

¹ Quoted by Tyler. Vol. I. pp. 204-205. Tyler quotes from the MSS. which he had before him at the time of writing. They are now in the possession of his estate.

very reason the more firmly to believe them. For such is the nature of every self-evident proposition that no arguments can be brought to prove it. . . . Hence, it is plain (if I have any skill in metaphysics) that when a point is very difficult to be proved, and all the arguments you can urge in its favor very weak and little to the point, it is not far from being a self-evident proposition.¹

On taking his master's degree at Yale, on September 12, 1770, he wrote "An Essay on the Use and Advantages of the Fine Arts," done partly in poetry and partly in prose. It contained probably the first call in the land for the people to give more heed to literature, and it also contained one of the first preposterously exaggerated pieces of criticism of the "literature" America had already produced. "This land," he said, "hath already begun to distinguish itself in literature. . . . Our late writers in the cause of liberty have gained the applause of Europe. Many elegant essays have been produced in the style of wit and humor, nor hath poetry been entirely uncultivated among us."

At the end of the prose essay was a long poem, "Prospect of the Future glory of America." It is a masterpiece of cheap chauvinism and tawdry jingoism. The marvel is that the American patriots during the World War did not make use of it for recruiting purposes, or for frightening German farmers. Speaking before the assembled intellectuals at the Yale Commencement, September 12, 1770, Trumbull predicted

. . . *bold heroes*

*Arm'd for the fight and blazing in the day!
Blood stains their steps, and o'er th' ensanguined
Mid warring thousands and mid thousands slain,
Their eager swords unsated carnage blend,
And ghastly deaths their raging course attend.
Her dreaded power the subject world shall see,
And laurel'd conquest wait her high degree.*

*And see her navies, rushing to the main,
Catch the swift gales and sweep the wat'ry plain;
Or led by commerce, at the merchant's door
Unlade the treasures of the Asian shore;*

¹ Quoted by Tyler. Vol. I. pp. 205-206.

*Or arm'd with thunder, on the guilty foe
Rush big with death and aim at th' unerring blow;
Bid every realm, that hears the trump of fame,
Quake at the distant terror of her name.*

*For pleasing Arts behold her matchless charms,
The first in letters, as the first in arms,
See bolder genius quit the narrow shore,
And realms of science, yet untraced, explore,
Hiding in brightness of superior day,
The fainting gleam of Europe's setting ray. . . .*

*This land her Swift and Addison shall view,
The former honours equall'd by the new;
Here shall some Shakespeare charm the rising age,
And hold in magic chains the listening stage. . . .¹*

The following year, forgetting for a while the future American navy, "rushing big with death and aim at th' unerring blow," Trumbull composed a piece of rubbish entitled, "On the Vanity of Youthful Expectation: An Elegy." It was one of those "hence" poems, very popular at the time among the gutter bards of Fleet street. Here is the first stanza:

*Hence, gaudy Flattery, with thy siren song,
Thy fading laurels and thy trump of praise,
Thy magic glass, that cheats the wand'ring throng,
And bids vain men grow vainer, as they gaze!²*

Two years later, in 1773, he wrote a satire on the current educational methods, entitled "The Progress of Dulness."³ It need not detain us. In the same year he composed an "Ode to Sleep." Tyler begins his discussion of it with the remark that it is "a composition resonant of noble and sweet music, and making, if one may say so, a nearer approach to genuine poetry than had then been achieved by an American, excepting Freneau."⁴ And he ends with this exclamation:

¹ 1820 edition of his poetical works. pp. 157-161.

² *Ibid.* p. 165.

³ This poem appears *ibid.* Vol. II. pp. 11-92.

⁴ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 211.

"Surely, the poetic apprentice who was capable of such work as this, was not far from Apollo's kingdom."¹ A more recent investigator has said of the poem that it "shows Trumbull at his best, if not his most accustomed style."² Both of these judgments seem to me to leap far beyond the facts. The poem is in eleven stanzas. Some of them follow:

I

Come, gentle Sleep!
Balm of my wounds and softener of my woes,
And lull my weary heart in sweet repose,
And bid my saddened soul forget to weep,
And close the tearful eye;
While dewy eve with solemn sweep,
Hath drawn her fleecy mantle o'er the sky,
And chased afar, adown th' ethereal way,
The din of bustling care and gaudy eye of day.

. . .

V

Come and loose the mortal chain,
That binds to clogs of clay th' ethereal wings;
And give th' astonished soul to rove,
Where never sunbeam stretch'd its wide domain;
And hail her kindred forms above,
In fields of uncreated spring,
Aloft where realms of endless glory rise,
And rapture paints in gold the landscape of the skies.

. . .

VIII

Hymen's torch with hallow'd fire
Rising beams th' auspicious ray.
Wake the dance, the festive lyre
Warbling sweet the nuptial lay;

¹ *Ibid.* p. 213.

² "John Trumbull: A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Literature in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts. Department of English, the University of Chicago," by Mary Emma Woodbury. 1929. p. 34.

*Gay with beauties, once alluring,
 Bid the bright enchantress move,
 Eyes that languish miles of rapture,
 And the rosy blush of love.
 On her glowing breast reclining,
 Mid that paradise of charms,
 Every blooming grace combining,
 Yielded to my circling arms,
 I clasp the Fair, and kindling at the view,
 Press to my heart the dear deceit, and think the transport.*

IX

*Hence, false delusive dreams,
 Fantastic hopes and mortal passions vain!
 Ascend, my soul to nobler themes
 Of happier import and sublimer strain. . . .*

. . . .

XI

*Teach me, like thee, to feel and know
 Our humble station in this vale of woe,
 Twilight of life, illumed with feeble ray,
 The infant dawning of eternal day;
 The heart expansive, through this scene improve
 The social soul of harmony and love;
 The heavenly hopes alone aspire and prize
 The virtue, knowledge, bliss and glory of the skies.¹*

There is surely nothing very distinguished here. The fancy is of a familiar kind, and so is the language. The poem has importance, however, in that it shows that the Puritan of Revolutionary times was taking greater liberties with his imagination. The first eight stanzas would have been unthinkable to Anne Bradstreet or Michael Wigglesworth. They would have begun with the ninth, "Hence, false delusive dreams, Fantastic hopes and mortal passions vain!"

In 1774, while he was studying law with John Adams in Boston, Trumbull wrote "An Elegy on the Times: Composed at Boston, dur-

¹ 1820 edition of Trumbull's poetry. Vol. I. pp. 114-120.

ing the operations of the Port-Bill, August, 1774." It was a pretentious performance. Almost any one of the ballads by the anonymous "smart ones" of the army camps was better.

It was in January, 1776, that Trumbull launched his most ambitious and most popular poem, "M'Fingal: A Modern Epic Poem." On that date the first two cantos of it were first published in Philadelphia. Immediately it was reprinted in every other important town in the English-speaking New World. The part it played in fomenting Revolutionary sentiment was incalculable. "Its popularity was unexampled."¹ The number of editions it went through in the five years after its first publication will never be known for certain. Trumbull added two more cantos in 1782, making four in all.

The story of the whole is very simple. It all takes place near Boston, shortly after the Battle of Lexington, April 15, 1775. The first two cantos deal with a dispute in town-meeting as to whether or not the community should separate from Great Britain. The leader of the Tory side is M'Fingal, a Scotch-American politician, with leather lungs, and gifted with "a Scottish gift of second-sight." Honorius is the leader of the Whigs, and apparently is patterned after John Adams, Trumbull's legal master. The poem opens with a speech by Honorius attacking the British Parliament for its presumption in claiming any authority over the Colonies. M'Fingal replies with an oration, which satirizes, of course, his own position. He yells:

*"Ye Whigs attend, and hear affrighted
The crimes whereof ye stand indicted;
The sins and follies past all compass,
That prove you guilty, or non compos.
I leave the verdict to your senses,
And jury of your consciences;
Which though they're neither good nor true,
Must yet convict you and your crew.
"Ungrateful sons! a factious band,
That rise against your parent land.
Ye viper race, that burst in strife
The genial womb that gave you life,*

¹ "The Origin of 'M'Fingal,'" by J. Hammond Trumbull, president of the Connecticut Historical Society. N. Y. 1868. p. 2.

*Tear with sharp fangs and forked tongue
The indulgent bowels whence ye sprung;
And scorn the debt and obligation,
You justly owe the British nation,
Which, since you cannot pay, your crew
Affect to swear was never due.*

*"Did not the deeds of England's primate
First drive your fathers to this climate.
Whom jails and fines and every ill
Forced to their good against their will?
Ye owe to their obliging temper
The peopling your new-fangled empire,
While every British act and canon
Stood forth your causa sine qua non.
Who'd seen, except for these restraints,
Your witches, quakers, whigs and saints,
Or heard of Mather's famed Magnalia,
If Charles and Laud had chanced to fail you?
Did they not send your charters o'er
And give you lands you own'd before,
Permit you all to spill your blood,
And drive out heathens where you could;
On these mild terms, that, conquest won,
The realm you gain'd should be their own?"*¹

To which Honorious replies in this manner :

*"'Tis well," Honorious cried; "your scheme
Has painted out a pretty dream.
We can't confute your second-sight;
We shall be slaves and you a knight.
These things must come, but I divine,
They'll come not in your day, nor mine.
"But, oh my friends, my brethren, hear;
And turn for once th' attentive ear.
Ye see how prompt to aid our woes
The tender mercies of our foes;
Ye see with what unvaried rancour*

¹ 1820 edition of Trumbull's poetry. Vol. I. pp. 42-43.

*Still for our blood their minions hanker;
 Nor aught can sate their mad ambition,
 From us, but death, or worse, submission.
 Shall these then riot in our spoil,
 Reap the gold harvest of our toil,
 Rise from their country's ruins proud,
 And roll their chariot-wheels in blood?
 See Gage, with inauspicious star,
 Has oped the gates of civil war,
 When streams of gore, from freemen slain,
 Encrimson'd Concord's fatal plain;
 Whose warning voice, with awful sounds,
 Still cries, like Abel's, from the ground;
 And heaven, attentive to its call,
 Shall doom the proud oppressor's fall.*

*"Rise then, ere ruin swift surprize,
 To victory, to vengeance, rise.
 Hark, how the distant din alarms;
 The echoing trumpet breathes, to arms.
 From provinces remote afar,
 The sons of glory rouse to war.
 'Tis Freedom calls! the raptured sound
 The Apalachian hills rebound.
 The Georgian coasts her voice shall hear,
 And start from lethargies of fear.
 From the parch'd zone, with glowing ray
 Where pours the sun intenser day,
 To shores where icy waters roll,
 And tremble to the glimm'ring pole,
 Inspired by freedom's heavenly charms,
 United nations wake to arms.
 The star of conquest lights their way,
 And guides their vengeance on their prey.
 Yes, though tyrannic force oppose,
 Still shall they triumph o'er their foes;
 Till heaven the happy land shall bless
 With safety, liberty and peace.*

*"And ye, whose souls of dastard mould
 Start at the bravery of the bold;
 To love your country who pretend,*

*Yet want all spirit to defend;
 Who feel your fancies so prolific,
 Engend'ring visions whims terrific,
 O'errun with horrors of coercion,
 Fire, blood and thunder in reversion,
 King's standards, pill'ries, confiscations,
 And Gage's scare-crow proclamations;
 Who scarce could rouse, if caught in fray,
 Presence of mind to run away;
 See nought but halters rise to view,
 In all your dreams, and deem them true;
 And while these phantoms haunt their brains,
 Bow down your willing necks to chains.
 Heavens! are ye sons of sires so great,
 Immortal in the fields of fate,
 Who braved all deaths, by land or sea,
 Who bled, who conquer'd, to be free?
 Hence coward souls, the worst disgrace
 Of our forefathers' valiant race;
 Hie homeward from the glorious field,
 There turn the wheel, the distaff wield;
 Act what ye are, nor dare to stain
 The warrior's arms with touch profane;
 There beg your more heroic wives,
 To guard your own, your children's, lives;
 Beneath their aprons seek a screen,
 Nor dare to mingle more with men."*¹

In the last two cantos Honorious does not appear, and his cause, already vindicated by the Revolution, is taken up by the mob, who force M'Fingal to the ignominy of tarring and feathering, and finally hang him thus to the liberty pole. He finally succeeds in pulling himself loose, and flees to Boston, never to return. The following is from the third canto:

*When now the mob in lucky hour,
 Had got their en'mies in their pow'r,
 They first proceed by wise command,
 To take the constable in hand;*

¹ 1820 edition of Trumbull's poetry. Vol I. pp. 81-82.

*Then from the pole's sublimest top
 They speeded to let down a rope,
 At once its other end in haste bind,
 And make it fast unto his waistband,
 Till like the earth, as, stretch'd on tenter,
 He hung self-balanç'd on his center.
 Then upwards all hands hoisting sail,
 They swung him like a keg of ale,
 Till to the pinnacle so fair,
 He rose like meteor in the air.
 As Socrates of old first did,
 To aid philosophy, get hoisted,
 And found his thoughts, flow strangely clear,
 Swung in a basket in mid air:
 Our culprit thus in purer sky,
 With like advantage rais'd his eye;
 And looking forth in prospect wide,
 His tory errors clearly spy'd,
 And from his elevated station,
 With bawling voice began addressing:
 "Good gentlemen, and friends, and kin,
 For heav'n's sake hear, if not for mine!
 I here renounce the pope, the Turks,
 The king, the dev'l, and all their works;
 And will, set me but once at ease,
 Turn whig or christian, what you please;
 And always mind your laws as justly,
 Should I live long as old Methus'lah,
 I'll never join the British rage,
 Nor help lord North, or gen'ral Gage,
 Nor lift my gun in future fights,
 Nor take away your charter'd rights,
 Nor overcome your new-rai's'd levies,
 Destroy your towns, nor burn your navies,
 Nor cut your poles down while I've breath,
 Tho' rais'd more thick than hatchel-teeth;
 But leave King George and all his elves
 To do their conqu'ring work themselves."*

*This said, they lower'd him down in state,
 Spread at all points, like falling cat;*

*But took a vote first on the question,
That they'd accept this full confession,
And to their fellowship and favour,
Restore him on his good behaviour.¹*

Tyler called "M'Fingal" "one of the world's masterpieces in political badinage."² Benson J. Lossing, editor of the 1864 edition of the poem, said of it: "Of all the literary productions of that day, having for its theme the character and doings of the men and times of the Revolution, the remarkable epic 'M'Fingal' is confessedly most deserving of immortality. It holds an honorable place among works of highest poetic merit; and as a satire . . . it exhibits force rarely equalled, and never surpassed by its predecessors in that peculiar field."³ "Gulliver's Travels" was fifty years old when "M'Fingal" was first published—and this opinion by Lossing in 1864! It seems almost incredible. Nobody nowadays who pretends to mature critical judgment takes the "epic" seriously. It is completely unknown to the general public, and to students it is of interest solely because of its historic importance in rousing Revolutionary sentiment. No more does one read in the literary monograph journals long discussions as to whether Trumbull's "M'Fingal" owes more to Butler's "Hudibras" than to Churchill's "The Ghost," or *vice versa*.

"The Anarchiad," in the composition of which Trumbull, Barlow, Humphreys and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins coöperated, was based, as has already been said, upon the fiction of the discovery of a great English epic among some Indian ruins. The initial paper of the series appeared in the *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* of October 26, 1786. Humphreys projected the book; it was probably suggested to him, as I have said, by "The Rolliad," which he saw while he was in England. "This series of papers, embracing twelve in number, were published complete in the *Gazette*, during the years 1786–1787, and in no other journals. The last number of

¹ 1820 edition of Trumbull's poetry. Vol. I. pp. 115–116.

² Tyler. Vol. I. p. 429.

³ "M'Fingal: An Epic Poem," by John Trumbull. With Introduction and Notes by Benson J. Lossing. N. Y. 1864. p. 4. Lossing is the author of the excellent "Pictorial History of the American Revolution," and other valuable historical works. His literary opinion here emphasizes once more the desirability for historians to keep clear of literary criticism. A more recent example of this deplorable practice among historians is Dr. Samuel Eliot Morison of Harvard. See his exaggerated opinion of Anne Bradstreet in "Builders of the Bay Colony." Boston. 1930. p. 331.

the series was published in the issue of September 13, of the latter year."¹

The poem was later reprinted in the Hartford papers, and in most of the leading papers in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. Who wrote each instalment has never been determined, though, by internal evidence, it would seem that Trumbull probably had more to do with the writing than any of his colleagues. The story behind the poem, the full title of which was "The Anarchiad: A Poem of the Restoration of Chaos and Substantial Night," was believed by many when it was first announced in the *New Haven Gazette*. It "is supposed to have exerted great and beneficial influence upon the public mind and to have tended in no small degree to check the leaders of insubordination and infidel philosophy."²

It was principally an attack upon French philosophy, and upon the condescension with which Europeans in general were then looking down at Americans. Among the persons attacked were Target, Raynal, Mably and Hilliard d'Auberteuil, but it was Mirabeau who was the object of the authors' most bitter onslaught. With his immorality and infidelity he personified to them all the horrors of godlessness. The following excerpt was No. IV, and appeared in the *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* for January 11, 1787. The legend at the head of it reads, "Extract from the Anarchiad, Book XXIII."

*Bow low, ye heavens, and all ye lands draw near,
The voice prophetic of great Anarch hear.*

. . .

*Thrice happy race! how blest are discord's heirs!
Blest while they know what anarchy is theirs;
Blest while they feel to them alone 'tis given
To know no sovereign, neither law nor Heaven.
From all mankind by traits peculiar known,
By frauds and lies distinguish'd for mine own,
Wonders of worlds! like whom, to mortal eyes,
None e'er have risen, and none e'er shall rise!*

¹ "The Anarchiad: A New England Poem. Written in Concert by David Humphreys, Joel Barlow, John Trumbull, and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins. Now First published in book form," edited with notes and appendices, by Luther G. Riggs. New Haven. 1861. pp. v-vi.

² *Ibid.* p. vii.

*Lo, the poor Briton, who, corrupted, sold,
Sees God in courts, or hears him chink in gold:
Whose soul, proud empire oft has taught to stray
Fat as the western world, and gates of day;
Though plagu'd with debts, with rage of conquest curst
In rags and tender-acts he puts no trust;
But in the public weal his own forgets,
Finds heaven for him who pays the nation's debts;
A heaven like London, his fond fancy makes,
Of nectar'd porter and ambrosial steaks.*

*Not so, Columbia, shall thy sons be known
To prize the public weal above their own;
In faith and justice least, as last in birth,
Their race shall grow, a by-word through the earth.
Long skill'd to act the hypocritic part,
Grace on the brow, and knav'ry at the heart,
Perform their frauds with sanctimonious air,
Despise good works, and balance sins by pray'r—
Forswear the public debt, the public cause;
Cheat heaven with forms, and earth with tender-laws,
And leave the empire, at its latest groans,
To work salvation out by faith alone.*

*Behold the reign of anarchy, begun,
And half the business of confusion done.
From hell's dark caverns discord sounds alarms,
Blows her loud trump, and calls my Shays to arms,
O'er the half land the desperate riot runs,
And maddening mobs assume their rusty guns.
From council's feeble, bolder faction grows,
The daring 'corsairs, and the savage foes;
O'er Western wilds, the tawny bands allied,
Insult the States of weakness and of pride;
Once friendly realms, unpaid each generous loan,
Wait to divide and share them for their own.*

*Now sinks the public mind; a death-like sleep
O'er all the torpid limbs begins to creep;*

*By dull degrees decays the vital heat,
The blood forgets to flow, the pulse to beat;
The powers of life, in mimic death withdrawn,
Closed the fixed eyes with one expiring yawn;
Exposed in state, to wait the funeral hour,
Lie the pale relics of departed power;
While conscience, harrowing up their souls, with dread,
Their ghost of empire stalks without a head.¹*

No critic of any standing has ever claimed high standing for this poem, not even Tyler, who had a strange weakness for colonial and Revolutionary verse. The thing is readable, but it is completely lacking in grandeur. So little did it have of immortal stuff in it that it was dead less than seventy-five years after it first appeared.²

As a poet Trumbull was surely no master. "M'Fingal," "Ode to Sleep," and "The Anarchiad" have been dead for nearly a century, and there is little likelihood that they will ever come back to life. But Trumbull did have talent of a kind for prose satire. His satires of the preposterous controversial tomes of his day were the best things he did, and so were his series of papers done in the manner of the *Spectator* and entitled "The Correspondent." If he had stuck to this type of writing there was a possibility that he would have been the founder of a rather pleasant type of essay in America. But he had ambitions for epic verse, and there he failed. Of all the Hartford Wits he was probably the most able. He had a sharp eye for the comical, and though he was jingoistic in his politics and preposterously patriotic in his few attempts at literary criticism, he was on the whole a civilized man. He never said, like Barlow, that the *Iliad* was immoral, and he never denounced the stage or dancing, like Dwight. There was a certain ribaldry—mediocre in quality as it was—about him that no respectable man or woman would have dared put on paper in New England a hundred or fifty or even twenty years before him. He ridiculed the more idiotic of the clergy, and also the bogus philosophers. That was something.

¹ "The Anarchiad: A New England Poem. Written in Concert by David Humphreys, Joel Barlow, John Trumbull, and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins. Now First published in book form." Riggs. pp. 18-21.

² In his preface to his edition of the poem, in 1861, Mr. Riggs complains bitterly of its long oblivion. No other edition has been put out since.

3. JOEL BARLOW

Joel Barlow will live in the history of American literature, if only because he was the author of one of the most pretentious and most unreadable poems ever written in the United States. In his day he was prominent as a statesman, and was one of the first to make the new country in the New World better known on the Continent, especially in France. He was born in Reading, Conn., on March 24, 1754.¹ At the age of twenty he entered Dartmouth, but after one year there he transferred to Yale, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in 1778. He did some post-graduate work, and was ordained in 1780. He joined the American Army as a chaplain, and in that capacity, on October 2, 1780, was present at the execution of Major André. The following Sunday he preached what he himself termed "a flaming political sermon" on Arnold's treachery, and because of it was invited to visit General George Washington.

In the meantime he was working on "The Vision of Columbus." As was then the custom, he began, in 1782, to invite subscriptions. He finally published it in 1787 as a philosophical poem of 4700 lines. It was dedicated to "His Most Christian Majesty, Louis the Sixteenth." The appendix carried the names of about 800 subscribers in Europe as well as America. The poem purports to present a picture of the great future that was awaiting the United States. It praises France and the Bourbons, and hymns Louis XVI, "the pride of Kings," for his generous aid to America in her time of need. There are also a few lines about the future rôle of the United States as the moral guide and pacifier of the nations of the world.

After the Revolution Barlow dabbled in journalism in Hartford. He also studied law, and was admitted to the Connecticut bar in 1786. About this time he reëdited—it really amounted to paraphrasing—Watts's Psalm-book for the use of Congregational churches in his native State. In 1788 he was offered a position with the fraudulent Scioto Land Company of Ohio. He went to Europe to interest French capitalists in it, and succeeded remarkably well.² Bar-

¹ For my biographical data I am indebted to "The Life and Letters of Joel Barlow, LL.D., Poet, Statesman, Philosopher. With Extracts From His Works and Hitherto Unpublished Poems," by Charles Burr Todd. N. Y. 1886.

² "The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America," by Bernard Faÿ. N. Y. 1927. Translated by Ramon Guthrie. p. 260.

low entered the employ of the company in good faith; when he discovered the fraud he quit.¹ While in France he became very much interested in the Revolution, and spoke a great deal in its behalf, siding with the moderate Girondists. He then went to London, and immediately plunged into the debate raging there with regard to the doings across the Channel. To help out the French cause in England, championed by Fox, he wrote a long dissertation, "Advice to the Privileged Classes," and a virulent poem, "The Conspiracy of Kings." Burke attacked the two works bitterly, and Fox defended them. They were proscribed, and Barlow had to flee to France to escape arrest. About the same time Paine had to make the same hurried trip to France on account of "The Rights of Man."

Back in France Barlow renewed his labors in behalf of the Revolutionary party. In "A Letter to the Convention" he urged that the Natural Man be allowed to govern himself as he saw fit, unencumbered by kingly authority. The Convention was so touched by the letter that it made him an honorary citizen of France, an honor shared only by two other Americans, Hamilton and Washington. Barlow was also entrusted with the work of organizing Savoy into a French department.¹ While in France he came across his favorite New England dish, mush and milk. He was so moved by the discovery that he composed a poem in praise of the dish, and called it "Hasty Pudding." It was probably his most popular poem. It was published in New Haven in 1796, and was dedicated to Mrs. Washington.

Partly as a result of the public favor accorded this poem Barlow was made American minister to Algiers in 1795, and was there for one and a half years. The Barbary pirates were then very active along the Algerian coast, and had captured many Americans, but Barlow managed to obtain the release of all of them. He also gave his countrymen valuable aid in the struggle with the black plague, which was then raging in those parts. In 1805, after seventeen years in Europe, and having acquired considerable international fame, he returned to America, and set up his residence in the District of Columbia, where he built himself a stately mansion which he called Kalorama (Fairview.) He was one of the leaders in the anti-Federalist

¹ I follow here the opinion of Dr. Vernon P. Squires, author of "Joel Barlow—Patriot, Democrat, and Man of Letters." *The Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota*. July, 1919. pp. 299-308. Fay does not commit himself on the question of Barlow's innocence.

² Fay. p. 315.

party, and for his activity on Jefferson's side he drew one of John Adams's severest rebukes: "Tom Paine is not a more worthless fellow."¹

All the time Barlow was thinking about "The Vision of Columbus," which from the beginning he considered merely as a sketch for an epic. He revised it extensively, adding a great deal of new material, and finally published it in 1807 as "The Columbiad." "It was printed and bound in sumptuous style and was the most costly book which up to that time had been published in America."² It was dedicated to Robert Fulton of steamboat fame, who was also an artist, and who made twelve illustrations for the book. Though expensive, it had a considerable sale.

In 1811 Barlow was sent to France as United States minister, and in that capacity followed Napoleon in his disastrous expedition into Russia for the purpose of negotiating a treaty with him, contracted pneumonia near Cracow, Poland, and died there on December 24, 1812. He was buried in the same city. So great was his fame at the time that meetings in honor of his memory were held in Warsaw, Paris, Washington and Hartford.

Barlow's only extended prose work that is worthy of mention was "Advice to the Privileged Orders," first published in London in 1792, and reprinted with corrections in New York in 1796. "It is safe to say that no political work of the day created so wide an interest, or was so extensively read."³ Fox defended it on the floor of the House of Commons, Burke condemned it in the same place, and Barlow had to flee London on account of the adverse criticism aroused by it. On July 9, 1793, after he had found asylum in Paris, his wife wrote to him from London, "You cannot think how much you are abused here. . . . You are very obnoxious here, and it is thought you cannot return with safety."⁴

The noise it raised was due rather to the place of its first publication, and to the prominence of the author, than to the novelty of the ideas in it. He argued for political equalitarianism, for the state as the guardian of justice as well as of property, for the rights of man, and for democracy. He said:

¹ Quoted in "Main Currents in American Thought," by Vernon Louis Parrington. N. Y. 1927. Vol. I. p. 384.

² Squires. p. 305.

³ Todd. p. 89.

⁴ Quoted by Todd. p. 109.

I hope I shall not be understood to mean, that the nature of man is totally changed by living in a free republic. I allow that it is still *interested* men and passionate *men*, that direct the affairs of the world. But in national assemblies, passion is lost in deliberation, and interest balances interest; till the good of the whole community combines the general will.¹

This was a far cry from the smug political conservatism of "The Anarchiad," in the composition of which Barlow had a hand. It was in direct conflict with the fiery sermons against French infidelity preached by Timothy Dwight about the same time. But there was surely nothing new in it. Jonathan Mayhew and John Wise had said the same things long before, and much more effectively. France did much to liberalize Barlow's mind, but a trip to Boston and the reading of "Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers," by Mayhew, and "Vindication of the Government in New England Churches," by Wise, would have been equally beneficial.

As for the lavish public favor which greeted "The Hasty-Pudding" when it was first published in 1793, and the high critical acclaim which nearly every literary historian has bestowed upon it, I can only regard both with amazement, especially the latter. Todd thinks that the poem "would be an addition to any literature."² Professor Fred Lewis Pattee considers it "a poem of real excellence,"³ and Professor Squires is of the opinion that it is "an amusing mock-heroic, undoubtedly the lightest and cleverest literary skit that had up to that time been produced by an American."⁴ Here are some excerpts from it:

*Dear Hasty-Pudding, what unpromis'd joy
Expands my heart, to meet thee in Savoy!
Doom'd o'er the world thro' devious paths to roam,
Each clime my country, and each house my home,
My soul is sooth'd, my cares have found an end,
I greet my long-lost unforgotten friend.*

¹ "The Political Writings of Joel Barlow. Containing Advice to the Privileged Orders. Letters to the National Convention. Letters to the People of Piedmont. The Conspiracy of Kings." A new edition. Corrected. N. Y. 1796. p. 66.

² Todd. p. 289.

³ "Century Readings in American Literature," edited by Fred Lewis Pattee. N. Y. 1927. Third edition. p. 109.

⁴ Squires. p. 303.

*For thee thro' Paris, that corrupted town,
How long in vain I wander'd up and down,
Where shameless Bacchus, with his drenching board
Cold from his cave, usurps the morning board.
London is lost in smoke and steep'd in tea;
No Yankee there can lisp the name of thee; . . .*

*But here, tho' distant from our native shore,
With mutual glee we meet and laugh once more.
The same; I know thee by that yellow face,
That strong 'complexion of true Indian race,
Which time can never change, nor soil impair,
Nor Alpine snows, nor Turkey's morbid air;
For endless years, thro' every mild domain,
Where grows the maize, there thou art sure to reign.¹*

. . .

*the house-wife urges all her care,
The well-earned feast to hasten and prepare.
The sifted meal already waits her hand,
The milk is strain'd, the bowls in order stand,
The fire flames high; and, as a pool (that takes
The head-long stream that o'er the mill-dam breaks)
Foams, roars and rages with incessant toils,
So the vex'd caldron rages, roars, and boils.*

*First, with clean salt she seasons well the food,
Then stews the flour and thickens all the flood.
Long o'er the sim'ring fire she lets it stand;
To stir it well demands a stronger hand;
The husband takes his turn; and round and round
The ladle flies; and at last the toil is crown'd;
When to the board the thronging huskers pour,
And take their seats as at the corn before.²*

¹ "The Hasty-Pudding; A Poem, in Three Cantos. Written at Chamrery, in Savoy, January, 1793," by Joel Barlow, minister plenipotentiary to France. 1847 edition. N. Y. pp. 4-5.

² *Ibid.* pp. 10-11.

And now this lyric flight:

*Blest 'cow! thy praise shall still my notes employ,
Great source of health, the only source of joy;
How oft thy teats these pious hands have press'd!
How oft thy bounties prove my only feast!
How oft I've fed thee with my fav'rite grain!
And roar'd, like thee, to find thy children slain!*

*Ye swains who know her various worth to prize,
Ah! house her well from winter's angry skies.
Potatoes, pumpkins, should her sadness cheer,
Corn from your crib, and mashes from your beer;
When spring returns she'll well acquit the loan,
And nurse at once your infants and her own.¹*

Does this "charming mock pastoral," to quote his biographer, prove that Barlow possessed "true genius"?² Hardly. It only proves that though the political ideas of the author of "Advice to the Privileged Orders" were greatly benefited by French influence, his poetical tastes and principles remained those of a Hartford wit, which is to say those of a mere imitation poet.

Barlow's paraphrasing of Watts's Psalm Book need not detain us. It is a horrible performance. There remains "The Columbiad," one of the most ambitious poems ever put on paper in America, and one of the most worthless. John Bach McMaster the historian did not exaggerate much when he spoke of the "contempt which any man who admires poetry must feel toward the scribbler who defiled the English language by writing 'The Columbiad.'"³ No literary historian, since the time this judgment was made, has dared controvert it.

Barlow's preface affords an interesting insight into the critical ideas prevalent in his day, vague and scattered as they were. Having said a few obvious things about metre and imagery in poetical composition, he goes on thus:

¹ *Ibid.* p. 11.

² Todd. p. 96.

³ "The History of the People of the United States," by John Bach McMaster. N. Y. 1893. Vol. II. p. 399.

But these circumstances of classical regularity are of little consideration in estimating the real merit of any work of this nature. Its merit must depend on the importance of the action, the disposition of the parts, the invention and application of incidents, the propriety of illustrations, the liveliness and chastity of the images, the suitable intervention of machinery, the moral tendency of the manners, the strength and sublimity of the sentiments; the whole being clothed in language whose energy, harmony and elegance shall constitute a style everywhere suited to the matter they have to treat. . . .

There is one point of view in which I wish the reader to place the character of my work, before he pronounces on its merit: I mean its political tendency. There are two distinct objects to be kept in view in the conduct of a narrative poem: the *poetical* object and the *moral* object. The poetical is the fictitious design of the action; the moral is the real design of the poem.¹

To illustrate his critical theory he considers the Iliad:

The real design in the Iliad . . . was to inflame the minds of young readers with an enthusiastic ardor for military fame; to include the pernicious doctrine of the divine right of kings; to teach both prince and people that military plunder was the most honorable mode of acquiring property; and that conquest, violence and war were the best employment of nations, the most glorious of bodily strength and of cultivated mind.

How much of the fatal policy of states, and of the miseries and degradations of social man, have been occasioned by the false notions of honor inspired by the works of Homer, it is not easy to ascertain. . . . My veneration for his genius is equal to that of his most idolatrous readers; but my reflections on the history of human errors have forced upon me the opinion that his existence has really proved one of the signal misfortunes of mankind.²

The influence of Virgil's masterpiece, he thinks, was almost as bad as that of Homer's. "The moral tendency of the *Æneid* of Virgil is nearly as pernicious as that of the works of Homer."³

Barlow then presents his own objects in the writing of "The Co-

¹ "The Columbiad, A Poem. With the Last Corrections of the Author," by Joel Barlow. Paris. 1813. pp. vii-viii.

² *Ibid.* pp. viii-ix.

³ *Ibid.* pp. ix-x.

lumbiad." They are, first, "to soothe and satisfy the desponding mind of Columbus"—to assure him that he did a good job, that despite the carnage of the Revolution all will turn out well. Secondly, to present in verse an epic poem of American history up-to-date.

But the real object embraces a larger scope: it is to inculcate the love of rational liberty, and to discountenance the deleterious passion for violence and war.¹

All good morals must be founded upon the republican principle. Human society is still where it is because it has had little experience with "organized liberty."

My object is altogether of a moral and political nature. I wish to encourage and strengthen, in the rising generation, a sense of the importance of republican institutions, as being the great foundation of public and private happiness, the necessary aliment of future and permanent meliorations in the condition of human nature. This is the moment in America to give such a direction to poetry, painting and the other fine arts, that true and useful ideas of glory may be implanted in the minds of men here to take place of the false and destructive ones that have degraded the species in other countries; impressions which have become so wrought into the most sacred institutions, that it is there thought impious to detect them and dangerous to root them out tho acknowledged to be false.²

The poem is in ten books. The first edition, printed in Philadelphia in 1807, was in large quarto. The following excerpt, a typical one, is from Book II. It deals with the sentiment of independence among the Colonies, and the coming of the Revolution.

*Each generous Adams, freedom's favorite pair,
And Hancock rose the Tyrant's rage to dare,
Groupt with firm Jefferson, her steadiest hope,
Of modest mien but vast unclouded scope.
Like four strong pillars of her state they stand,
They clear from doubt her brave but wavering band;*

¹ *Ibid.* p. xii.

² *Ibid.* p. xix.

*Colonial charters in their hands they bore
 And lawless acts of ministerial power.
 Some injured right in every page appears,
 A king in terrors and a land in tears;
 From all his guileful plots they veil they drew,
 With eye retortive look'd creation thro,
 Traced moral nature thro her total plan,
 Markt all the steps of liberty and man;
 Crowds rose to reason while their accents rung,
 And INDEPENDENCE thunder'd from their tongue.*

*Columbus turn'd; when rolling to the shore
 Swells o'er the seas an undulating roar;
 Slow, dark, portentous, as the meteors sweep
 And curtain back the illimitable deep,
 High stalks, from surge to surge, a demon Form
 That howls thro heaven and breathes a billowing storm.
 His head is hung with clouds; his giant hand
 Flings a blue flame far flickering to the land;
 His blood-stain'd limbs drip carnage as he strides
 And taint with glory groom the staggering tides;
 Like two red suns his quivering eye balls glare,
 His mouth disgorges all the stores of war,
 Pikes, muskets, mortars, guns and globes of fire
 And lighted bombs that fusing trails expire.*

. . .

*Where fortless Falmouth, looking o'er her bay,
 In terror saw the approaching thunders play,
 The fire begins; the shells o'er-arching fly
 And shoot a thousand rainbows thro the sky;
 On Charlestown spires, on Bedford roofs they light,
 Groton and Fairfield kindle from the flight,
 Norwalk expands the blaze; o'er Reading hills
 High flaming Danbury the welkin fills;
 Esopus burns, Newyork's delightful fanes
 And sea-nursed Norfolk light the neighboring plains.*

. . .

*Crowds of wild fugitives, with frantic tread,
 Flit thro the flames that pierce the midnight shade,
 Back on the burning domes revert their eyes,
 Where some lost friend, some perisht infant lies.
 Their maim'd, their sick, their age-enfeebled sires
 Have sunk sad victims to the stateless fires;
 They greet with one last look their tottering walls,
 See the blaze thicken as the ruin falls,
 Then o'er the country train their dumb despair
 And far behind them leave the dancing glare;
 Their own crusht roofs still lend a trembling light,
 Point their long shadows and direct their flight.
 Till wandering wide they seek some cottage door,
 Ask the vile pittance due the vagrant poor;
 Or faint and faltering on the devious road,
 They sink at last and yield their mortal load.¹*

Thus it goes on in the same heavy grandiloquence to the end, with hardly a line of relief. The style throughout is pompous, bombastic, and frequently almost unreadable. Barlow's writing, even in his earlier years, was never distinguished for its elegance, but as he grew older it became even more turgid. As Professor Parrington has said, "To criticize it is a work of supererogation."² At the end of the Eighteenth Century the English had discovered the emptiness of the heroic couplet, and proceeded to discard it, but in America it continued to hold sway for many years. Barlow had been in Europe seventeen years when he published "The Columbiad," and four or five of them he had spent in England, but the literary changes that were taking place under his nose apparently made no impression on him.

At the end of the last edition of the poem supervised by the author are more than seventy pages of notes, explaining allusions in the text.³ The last two pages of the notes are rather interesting in that they contain what was perhaps the first plea to come from an American of prominence for simplified spelling. Barlow argues in favor of such usages as the following: *labor, honor, tho, thro, fixt, capt, meant, blest*. He employs these spellings in his text. "I consider," he says,

¹ "The Columbiad, A Poem. With the Last Corrections of the Author." Barlow. pp. 43-48.

² Parrington. Vol. I. p. 387.

³ In the Paris 1813 edition which I am using the notes take up pp. 365-438.

"this reform as a valuable improvement in the language, because it brings a numerous class of words to be written as they are spoken."¹ His general principle is a very sound one: "The idea of putting a stop to innovation in a living language is absurd, unless we put a stop to thinking. When a language becomes fixt, it becomes a dead language."²

There remains one aspect of Barlow's life, which, to the best of my knowledge, has passed by all the older historians, but which will probably be his chief claim to remembrance a hundred years from today. I refer to the correspondence he carried on with his wife during his long travels, and to the poems he wrote to her. If life on the Continent did nothing else to him, it at least added grace and charm to his personality, and transformed his private letters and poems into things worthy of respect. He and his wife were devoted to each other in an extraordinary way. At forty-five he wrote to her, "Never did two souls love as we have loved."³ Their letters to each other bear this out. On January 1, 1793, Mrs. Barlow, who remained in London, wrote to her husband in Paris, whither he had to flee on account of his "Advice to the Privileged Classes":

Would to heaven you had not left me — that is, unless it has given you satisfaction; if so, I have nothing to say. Here you cannot return at present; everything evil is said of you, and I am obliged to avoid company not to hear you abused. I hope you may be provided for in some eligible way in Paris, or what is to become of us? For myself it matters little; I shall and can go home in the spring. Our friends in Paris wrote that they expected me there; why should I go unless you are like to continue? . . . Our friends the P's have quite withdrawn their attentions. I have not seen nor heard from them in more than a month — on account of your politics, I suppose, but am not sorry.⁴

On January 28 of the same year she wrote:

Your affairs here are all a wreck, as Mr. J—N [Johnston, his printer] will tell you. It is my present intention to go to my country early in the spring: this you will undoubtedly advise, hard as

¹ In the Paris 1813 edition which I am using this note appears on p. 437.

² *Ibid.* p. 438.

³ Quoted by Todd. p. 292.

⁴ Quoted *ibid.* pp. 108-109.

it is for us both. My heart revolts at the idea, but it must be. . . . I told you our friends the P's had quite withdrawn themselves from me. I have not seen nor heard from either of them in more than two months. . . . My feelings have been much wounded, as you may suppose, to see and hear my beloved, my best friend, thus scandalized as he has been here, when I know so well the goodness, the rectitude of his heart and intentions. I was going to enclose a long account of you which has been in the public papers but on the whole thought it not worth the notice. . . . Make yourself happy and respectable; follow entirely your own inclinations in so doing, knowing that will always gratify me; I know your conduct will always be directed by humanity, integrity, and a desire to promote the good of your fellow-creatures.¹

On each wedding anniversary Barlow used to compose a poem in honor of his wife. Only four of these poems have been preserved. They are the only ones of all his verses that are at all worth reading. I quote the best of the lot. It was written at Chambéry on January 26, 1793.

*Blest Hymen, hail that memorable day
Whose twelfth return my constant bosom warms,
Whose morning rose with promised pleasure gay,
Whose faithful evening gave me Delia's charms —
Those charms that still, with ever new delight,
Assuage and feed the flames of young desire,
Whose magic powers can temper and unite
The husband's friendship with the lover's fire.*

*Say, gentle god, if e'er thy torch before
Illum'ed the altar for so pure a pair?
If e'er approached thy consecrated bower
A swain so grateful, so divine a fair?*

*Love, the delusive Power who often flies
Submissive souls that yield to thy decree,
Charmed with our lasting flame, approves the ties,
Folds his white wings, and shares his throne with thee.*

¹ Quoted *ibid.* p. 110.

*United Sovereigns! hear my fervent prayer,
Extend through life your undivided sway,
In love and union bless your suppliant pair
With many a sweet return of this delightful day.*¹

Surely this is not great verse, but it is quite an advance from Anne Bradstreet's poem to her husband, which she ended with the proud boast that though she loved him much, she loved God infinitely more. Barlow gloried in the love between his wife and himself, and made no apologies about it. To that extent France did him a great deal of good, and to that extent it made him less the Hartford wit and more the real poet. France must have done other things to him. The following letter, sent to his wife from Algiers, and which was to be delivered to her only in case he died from the plague raging there, could not have been written by the Barlow who collaborated in "The Anarchiad," and was a crony of President Timothy Dwight of Yale. It is one of the truly great letters of American history. In 1796, when it was written, the Barlows were married fifteen years.

Algiers, 8th July, 1796.

To Mrs. Barlow in Paris:

My dearest Life, and only Love:—I run no risk of alarming your extreme sensitivity by writing this letter, since it is not my intention that it shall come into your hands unless and until, through some other channel, you shall have been informed of the event which it anticipates as possible. For our happy union to be dissolved by death, is indeed at every moment possible; but at this time there is uncommon degree of danger that you may lose a life which I know you value more than you do your own. I say I *know* this, because I have long been taught, from our perfect sympathy of affection, to judge your heart by mine: and I can say solemnly and truly, as far as I know myself, that I have no other value for my own life than as a means of continuing a conjugal union with the best of women—the wife of my soul—my first, my last, my only love.

I have told you in my current letters that the plague is raging with considerable violence in this place. I must tell you in this, if it should be your fortune to see it, that a pressing duty of human-

¹ Quoted by Todd. pp. 292-293.

ity requires me to expose myself more than other considerations would justify, in endeavoring to save as many of our unhappy citizens as possible from falling a sacrifice, and to embark them at this cruel moment for their country.

Though they are dying very fast, yet it is possible my exertions may be the means of saving a number who otherwise would perish. If this should be the case, and *I* should fall instead of them, my tender, generous friend must not upbraid my memory by ever *thinking* I did too much. But she cannot help it—I know she cannot. . . .

Another consideration: many of these persons have wives at home as well as I, from whom they have been much longer separated, under more affecting circumstances,—having been held in a merciless and despondent slavery. If their wives love them as much as mine does me (a thing I cannot believe, but have no right to deny) ask these lately disconsolate, and now joyous, families whether I have done too much?

Since I write this as if it were the last poor demonstration of my affection to my lovely friend, I have much to say; and it is with difficulty that I can steal an hour from the fatigue of business to devote to the grateful, painful task. But tell me (you cannot tell me), where shall I begin? where shall I end? how shall I put an eternal period to a correspondence which has given so much comfort? with what expression of regret shall I take leave of my happiness? with what words of tenderness, of gratitude, of counsel, of consolation, shall I pay you for what I am robbing you of,—the husband whom you cherish, the friend who is all your own? . . .

Enclosed is my last will, made in conformity to the one I left in the hands of Dr. Hopkins of Hartford, as you may remember. [He leaves property worth about \$100,000, and of it he says], But whatever may be the value of what I leave, it is bequeathed simply and wholly to you. . . .

In view of justice and equity, whatever we possess at this moment is a joint property between ourselves, and to remain to the survivor. When you gave me your blessed self you knew I was destitute of every other possession, as of every other enjoyment. I was rich only in the fund of your affectionate economy, and the sweet consolation of your society. In our various struggles and disappointments, while trying to observe a moderate competency

for the quiet enjoyment of what we used to call the remainder of our lives, I have often been rendered happy by misfortunes; for the heaviest we have met with were turned into blessings by the opportunities they gave me to discover new virtues in you, who taught me how to bear them.

I have often told you since the year 1791, the period of our deepest difficulties (and even during that period), that I have never been so easy and contented before. And I have certainly been happier in you during the latter years of our union than I was in the former years;—not that I have loved you more ardently, or more exclusively, for that was impossible; but I have loved you *better*; my heart has been more full of your excellence, and less agitated with objects of ambition, which used to devour me too much. . . .

I certainly hope to escape from this place, and return to your beloved arms. No man has stronger inducements to live than I have. I have no quarrel with the world; it has used me as well as could be expected. I have valuable friends in every country where I have put my foot, not excepting this abominable sink of wickedness, pestilence, and folly,—the city of Algiers. [I have books, friends, the ability to exercise charity, a fair income, and health]; and to give relish to all enjoyments, and smooth away the asperities that might arise from unforeseen calamities, I have the wife that my youth chose, and my advancing age has cherished,—the pattern of excellence,—the example of every virtue,—from whom all my joys have risen, in whom all my hopes are centered.

I will use every precaution for my safety, as well for your sake as mine. But if you should see me no more, my dearest friend, you will not forget I loved you. As you have valued my love, and as you believe this letter is written with an intention to promote your happiness at a time when it will be forever out of my power to contribute to it in any other way, I beg you will kindly receive the last advice I can give you, with which I am going to close our endearing discourse. . . . Submitting with patience to a destiny that is unavoidable, let your tenderness for me cease to agitate that lovely bosom; banish it to the house of darkness and dust with the object that you can no longer be benefited by it, and transfer your affections to some worthy person who shall supply my place in the relation I have borne to you. It is for the living, not the dead, to be rendered happy by the sweetness of your temper,

the purity of your heart, your exalted sentiments, your cultivated spirit, your undivided love. Happy man of your choice! should he know and prize the treasure of such a wife! O treat her tenderly, my dear sir; she is used to nothing but kindness, unbounded love and confidence. She is all that any reasonable man can desire. She is more than I have merited, or perhaps than you can merit. . . .

Farewell, my wife; and though I am not used to subscribe my letters addressed to you, your familiarity with my writing having always rendered it unnecessary, yet it seems proper that the last characters which this hand shall trace for your perusal should compose the name of your most faithful, most affectionate, and most grateful husband.

Joel Barlow.¹

Barlow's biographer has said of the correspondence between him and his wife: "The fervor and devotion seen in their letters has not been equalled since those of Abelard and Héloïse."² But it is unnecessary to exaggerate to bring out the grandeur of the letters, particularly the one from Algiers. Barlow was the strangest of all the Hartford wits. He started out a good conservative, a hater of democracy and of the infidel French philosophy. He went to Europe, and spent some time in London and Paris. The result was "Advice to the Privileged Classes" and "A Letter to the National Convention of France," two ardently democratic documents. At the same time he wrote some charming love poems to his wife that would have given nightmares to Timothy Dwight. He returned to America, went to Washington, wrote "The Columbiad," and—of all things, after having been among civilized Europeans for seventeen years—argued that the Iliad was one of the worst curses ever let loose on the human race. Then there was his letter to his wife from Algiers.

The psychoanalysts would probably see in him a double personality: the conservative, Puritanical democracy-hating Hartford wit, and the man of the world. Unluckily for his memory, he is chiefly remembered nowadays as the Hartford wit, the author of the ponderous "The Columbiad." We should also remember "Advice to the Privileged Classes," the wedding anniversary poems, and the letter from Algiers to his wife.

¹ Quoted by Todd. pp. 295-303.

² *Ibid.* p. 292.

As time went on, and the Barlows of America traveled more in Europe and read more and better European books, the old tradition of Hartford and of Yale was relegated more and more to the background. The business of exorcising Puritanism from a people is a long process. It takes many generations. Look at New England, even in this day and time. Look at Boston, at Hartford, at New Haven—at Harvard and Yale. Barrett Wendell believed in witches as late as 1891, when he wrote "Cotton Mather, Puritan Priest," and there is no evidence that he changed his mind to his dying day in 1921.

4. TIMOTHY DWIGHT

President Stiles of Yale called Timothy Dwight His Loftiness, and in common parlance he was known as Old Pope Dwight.¹ His contemporary reputation was vast and his writings were widely read, but today he is no more than a name. He was born on May 14, 1752, at Northampton, Mass. His mother was the third daughter of Jonathan Edwards. Like Trumbull he was an almost incredibly precocious child. Under his mother's tuition he learned "the alphabet in one lesson and read the Bible at four years of age, studying Latin at six, and being instructed in geography and history by the mother who acted on the theory that children often lose several years of profitable learning by being considered too young to be taught."² He entered Yale when he was thirteen, and began writing poetry two years later. He graduated at the top of his class. "His devotion to study was such that he restricted his diet so that he might not be compelled to take any exercise, his dinner at one time being consumed with the mathematical precision of twelve mouthfuls."³

During the Revolution he was a chaplain to General Parson's brigade. To do this he resigned his tutorship at Yale, to which he was appointed two years after graduation. His revolutionary sermons, songs, and poems were very popular. Of the latter "Columbia" was unquestionably the best. It first saw print in 1777. Six years before he had begun work on his elephantine epic, "The Conquest of Canaan," which he managed to complete in 1785.

¹ "Classical Shades," by M. A. De Wolfe Howe. Boston. 1928. Ch. I. "Timothy Dwight." p. 16.

² "The Clergy in American Life and Letters," by Daniel Dulany Addison. N. Y. 1900. p. 157.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 158-159.

Dwight was thirty-two at the time. His son later said of the poem: "It is not believed that the history of English poetry contains the account of any equal effort made at so early an age."¹ Unfortunately, that is all that can be said for the effort, but at the time it created quite a stir. It was reprinted in London in 1788 and was given the honor of a rather favorable review by Cowper in the *Analytical Review*. Cowper said of it: "His numbers imitate closely those of Pope, and therefore cannot fail to be musical; but he is chiefly to be commended for the animation with which he writes, and which rather increases as he proceeds, than suffers abatement. . . . A strain of fine enthusiasm runs through the whole book; and we will venture to affirm that no man, who has a soul impressible by a bright display of the grandest subjects that revelation furnishes, will read it without emotion."² All of which proves that, at least in this case, Cowper was as bad a critic as Dwight was a poet.

Dwight lived in Northampton from 1777-1783, and twice represented the town in the General Court. In the latter year he took charge of a parish in Greenfield, Conn., and was in that post till 1795, when he was elected president of Yale. In 1788 he produced "The Triumph of Infidelity," a terrific onslaught on French philosophy that was rapidly making its way in America. In 1794 he published "Greenfield Hill," which proved to be one of his most popular poems. He preached almost incessantly, and after his death 173 of his sermons were collected in a five-volume edition, under the title of "Theology Explained and Defended." At Yale he did much to build up the college. He increased its student body from 100 to 300.³ He founded the Yale Medical School, and among his numerous excellent appointments to it was Professor Benjamin Silliman, one of the foremost chemists of the time. In 1799 he formed the plan for the establishment of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, contributing to its proceedings two valuable papers: "A Statistical History of New Haven" and "Observations on Language." He was also a founder of the Andover Theological Seminary and of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He traveled widely in New England and New York, always jotting down his observations of the people he met and of the places he visited, and several years after his death these notes were bound in a colossal five-volume edition under the

¹ Quoted *ibid.* p. 162.

² Quoted *ibid.* pp. 164-165.

³ Howe. p. 29.

title, "Travels in New England and New York." He died of cancer in 1817.¹ Judge Sherman, one of Dwight's most intimate friends, said of him at the funeral: "I have often expressed the opinion, which length of time has continually strengthened, that no man except 'the Father of his Country' had conferred greater benefits on our nation than President Dwight."²

This is gross overpraise. Dwight was in some ways a useful man, but it was fortunate that there were not many like him high in the public estimation. He opposed democracy to the end of his days, and with arguments that even his contemporaries looked upon with amazement. His ideal was the church-state of John Cotton and Increase Mather. To put government into the hands of those who entertained some doubts about Holy Writ was, to him, the height of criminality. He considered it "a presumption little short of blasphemy to assert that sinners are competent to manage the temporal affairs of society."³

Infidelity and democracy, he held, "went hand in hand, and to suffer the commonwealth to fall under the control of the godless meant the end of all morality and religion. To uphold the established order . . . was for him the first of Christian duties. A stalwart Federalist, he was a good hater of all Jacobins. His detestation of Jefferson was virulent and he swallowed the nastiest tales about the great Virginian without a qualm, never doubting their authenticity."⁴

Of the infidelity of such people as Hume and Voltaire he could never say anything bad enough. He was the last stalwart defender of the old-fashioned religion of the Mathers against the inroads of deism and materialism. He hammered away at both of them in sermons, addresses and class lectures, "and soon effected so thoroughgoing a reformation that skepticism became disreputable at Yale, and students who had been in the habit of changing their names for those of French deists now formed societies to pray for one another. . . . As a consequence of Dwight's preaching, infidelity ceased to be fashionable or even reputable in Connecticut."⁵ Dwight, naturally, was in favor of

¹ "A sketch of the Life and Character of Pres. Dwight. Delivered as an Eulogium, In New-Haven, February 12, 1817, Before the Academic Body of Yale College, Composed of the Senatus Academicus, Faculty and Students," by Benjamin Silliman, professor of chemistry and pharmacy. New Haven. 1817. p. 43.

² Quoted by Addison. p. 190.

³ Parrington. Vol. I. pp. 358-359.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 361-362.

⁵ "The Old Time College President," by George P. Schmidt. The Columbia University Press. N. Y. 1930. pp. 188-189.

making the support of public worship compulsory. He also approved an arrangement "whereby the schools, high and low, were essentially church schools."¹

Of his poems "Columbia," though surely no masterpiece, is by far the best. It is rather ornate, and somewhat undecided in its emotion, yet it has an appropriate resonance, and one or two fair conceits. I quote from it:

*Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,
The queen of the world, and child of the skies!
Thy genius commands thee; with rapture behold,
While ages on ages thy splendors unfold.
Thy reign is the last, and the noblest of time,
Most fruitful thy soil, most inviting thy clime;
Let the crimes of the east ne'er crimson thy name,
Be freedom, and science, and virtue, thy fame.*

*To conquest, and slaughter, let Europe aspire:
'Whelm nations in blood, and wrap cities in fire:
Thy heroes the rights of mankind shall defend,
And triumph pursue them, and glory attend.
A world is thy realm: for a world be thy laws,
Enlarg'd as thine empire, and just as thy cause;
On Freedom's broad basis, that empire shall rise,
Extend with the main, and dissolve with the skies.*

. . .

*Nor less shall thy fair ones to glory ascend,
And Genius and Beauty in harmony blend;
The graces of form shall awake pure desire,
And the charms of the soul ever cherish the fire;
Their sweetness unmingled, their manners refin'd
And Virtue's bright image instamp'd on the mind,
With peace and soft rapture shall teach life to glow,
And light up a smile in the aspect of woe.*

. . .

¹ *Ibid.* p. 214.

*Thus, as down a lone valley, with cedars o'erspread,
 From war's dread confusion I pensively stray'd —
 The gloom from the face of fair heav'n retir'd;
 The winds ceas'd to murmur; the thunders expir'd;
 Perfumes, as of Eden, flow'd sweetly along:
 And a voice, as of angels, enchantingly sung:
 "Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,
 The queen of the world, and the child of the skies." ¹*

"Greenfield Hill," which was very popular when it was first published in 1794, is considerably inferior to "Columbia." It is much more pretentious, and reeks with blood and thunder. It deals with the plundering of New Haven and the surrounding land, in 1779, by a British brigade under the command of Sir George Collyer, and the subsequent plundering of the town of Fairfield. The poem starts off with a full account of the sacking of both towns, after which comes a bitter address to the Hero, returning victorious from war to view the ruins. The following is a fair excerpt:

*Go too, thou ardent Hero! go,
 Fresh from fields of war, and woe,
 From thy proud, triumphal car,
 Glittering with the spoils of war,
 While thy wheels majestic roll
 Onward to th' immortal goal;
 While thy arms with lightning blaze;
 While extatic millions gaze;
 Shouts to heaven thy triumphs wing,
 And imagin'd angels sing;
 Lessening in th' immense parade,
 All preceding glories fade,
 Cæsar's changing star retires,
 And eclips'd are Marlborough's fires;
 Cast around thee searching eyes,
 Mark thy splendours, whence they rise!
 See, on fields, with corpses spread,
 Thine exulting coursers tread!*

¹ "Revolutionary Songs and Ballads," by F. Moore. N. Y. 1861. p. 174.

*See, thy car, with garlands proud,
Rolls thro' streams of human blood!
Brothers by a brother gor'd!
Forth, from Adam's veins, the stream,
Living, ran through thee and them.*

*Mark! around thy wandering eye,
Wasted fields of culture lie,
Late with plenteous harvests crown'd,
Now in gulphs of ruin drown'd
There the Heavens their bounty shower'd;
Seasons there their blessings pour'd;
Health and comfort, clothes and food;
Where is now the boundless good?*

*See yon flames thro' ether bend:
See th' immense of smoke ascend!
Lost, asham'd, the sky retires,
And the sun withdraws his fires.
Cities there in ruin lie,
Towns and villages of joy;
Temples, where, to virtue given,
Man was form'd for life, and Heaven;
Domes of pomp, and seats of bliss
Mansions sanctified to peace;
Cots, where harmless households dwelt,
And each soft emotion felt;
Sportive play'd the wanton child,
And white Age look'd on, and smil'd:
Streets, where cheerful Business reign'd,
Shops, where Toil his house sustain'd;
Humble wishes sought, and found
Life, with peace and comfort crown'd.*

. . .

*Hark, his [Death's] hollow voice resounds!
O'er the world's unmeasur'd bounds!
Ocean quakes, thro' all his waves;
Earth remurmurs, from her caves.*

*Cease, fond man! thy claims resign;
 Earth, with all her realms is mine.
 Thron'd with all-subduing sway,
 Here I bid the world obey.*

. . .

*Who so great a king as I?
 My pavilion is the sky;
 Earth my realm, my throne the air;
 Winds my coursers; clouds my car;
 Suns but light me to my prey;
 Midnight veils my secret way:
 O'er expiring worlds I ride;
 Death and Plague before me stride:*

. . .

Earth, air, ocean, all are mine.

*Why, triumphant Hero! why
 Stares thy wild and tearless eye?
 Whence thy pale and spectred brow?
 Palsied limbs? and sighs of woe?
 Has the gloomy monarch's dart
 Pierc'd with agony thy heart?
 Or has human misery?
 Or the advancing curse of Heaven?*

. . .

*Lo! in yonder, verging skies,
 Myriad troops of spectres rise;
 Spirits of a distant world:
 By thy arm to ruin hurl'd.
 Bristling stands their bloody hair;
 On thee gleams their angry stare;
 In pale clouds approaching, see
 Every finger points at thee!
 "Thou," they feebly murmuring cry,
 "Thou hast drunk our cup of joy;*

*Ere the mortal race was run,
 Quench'd in blood our noon-day sun;
 Halv'd the hour, by Mercy given,
 To prepare for life and heaven;
 And with all our guilt unpaid,
 Plung'd us to the untimely dead."*

*Fainting Hero! pangs unknown
 Break, and break, thy heart of stone;
 Short, and shorter, pants thy breath,
 And thine eye-balls swim in death;
 Death thy brow has whiten'd o'er;
 Thou art fallen, to rise no more.¹*

Of "The Conquest of Canaan," that prodigious and preposterous allegory representing the heroes of American history up to its time under the guise of Hebrew chieftains, little need be said. Like "M'Fingal" and "The Columbiad" — as poetry it is much worse than either — it may serve as a fine example of the folly of attempting to manufacture a national literature to order. The Hartford wits never learned the simple truth that it takes more than diligence and a measure of laudable patriotism to create a body of national letters. One would think that they knew enough of history to appreciate this fact, but they were all obsessed with a colossal vanity regarding their own writings. Dwight, for instance, shamelessly compared "The Conquest of Canaan" to the Iliad and the Æneid. In his preface to his "epic" he said:

It may perhaps be thought the result of inattention or ignorance, that he chose a subject [note the use of the third person by His Loftiness], in which his countrymen had no national interest. But he remarked, that the Iliad and the Eneid were as agreeable to modern nations, as to the Greeks and Romans. The reason he supposed to be obvious — the subjects of those poems furnish the fairest opportunities of exhibiting the agreeable, the novel, the moral, the pathetic, and the sublime. If he is not deceived, the subject he has chosen possesses, in a degree, the same advantages.²

¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 5-13.

² "The Conquest of Canaan; A Poem in Eleven Books," by Timothy Dwight. Hartford,

For the fine arts Dwight had little use. He "suggested, in a course of lectures in composition and rhetoric, that novel-reading in itself may not be wrong, provided the novels read promote peace, morality, and the interests of mankind."¹ But for the stage he could not say even this much. His "Essay on the Stage" (1824) is one of the most terrific and idiotic attacks ever made against that institution. It is surprising that the New England Watch and Ward Society has not made use of it. Dwight's general argument is that since no specific mention of the stage is made in the Bible, it therefore has no divine sanction. But what probably really turned him against it was the legend of immorality which was then attached to it in the Anglo-Saxon world. Respectable people, it will be recalled, did not go to the theatre in England, and even Shakespeare, it seems, was not considered quite proper company for a gentleman or lady. The same tradition was brought over to this country, and it was because of it that the Hallam Company had such hard going in the Colonies in the middle of the Eighteenth Century.

The common people paid no attention to this tradition, and went to see performances of Shakespeare and Dryden and Ben Jonson. But "scholars" like Dwight took it seriously and wrote voluminously against the theatre. As president of Yale he let it be known that "the morality of the Stage . . . is the great enemy of true morality, and of moral beings; aiming at the extinction of the former, and the ruin and misery of the latter."² Actors, as a class, he said, were "a nuisance in the earth, the very offal of society," adding this strange piece of logic: "Few seem inclined to vindicate the character of players, or put them on a level with men of other professions. That they are notorious for wickedness is undeniable. On this general acknowledgement may be justly inferred an equally undeniable truth—that the Stage itself is an evil."³

As to the problem of reforming the stage, he thought it was ridiculous:

Conn. 1785. London. 1788. pp. vi-vii. It is interesting to note here that the extremely orthodox Dwight, who abhorred the stage and nearly everything European, found nothing to complain of in the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*, while Barlow, as witness his preface to "The Columbiad," considered both as immoral, and as having done great injury to mankind.

¹ Schmidt. p. 194. Dr. Schmidt has examined a student's notes of these lectures, 1807.

² "An Essay on the Stage: in which the Arguments in its Behalf, and those Against it, are Considered; and its Morality, Character, and Effects Illustrated," by Timothy Dwight, S. T. D., LL.D. Late Pres. of Yale. London. 1824. Printed in Middletown, Conn. p. 69.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 101-102.

Evil can never be reformed; it must be changed in its very essence. We might as soon attempt to reform the gambler, by teaching him fair game, or the thief, by teaching him concealment, as attempt to reform the Stage; its reform, from its very nature, is impossible.

When a Christian attends, or justifies Stage exhibition, his departure from God is manifest; the prevalence of the unrenewed man in his heart seems so great, that little evidence of gracious affection can be discovered in it. Thus we see that the Stage is never justified, but by the man in whose heart evil has preponderating influence.¹

Of all of Dwight's writings against infidelity, deism and materialism perhaps the most representative is "A Discourse, in Two Parts, Delivered July 23, 1812, on the Public Fast, in the Chapel of Yale College." (Utica, 1812.) One of the reverend president's pet hatreds was the French Revolution—France in general, for that matter. "Of all imaginable evils he considered an alliance with France the worst."² Speaking of the Revolution and its deistic leaders, he said:

Here was opened an ample field for the labours of the abandoned men in the work of pollution and death. There is no small reason to believe, that every individual illuminee, and almost, if not quite, every infidel, on the continent of *Europe*, lent his labours, when he could; and his wishes, when he could not; for the advancement of the sins and miseries, which attended the unexampled corruption. Had not God *taken the wise in their own craftiness*, and caused the *wicked to fall into the pit which they digged*, and *into the snares which their hands had set*; it is impossible to conjecture the extent to which they would have carried their devastation of human happiness.³

Then follows a passage on infidelity in general, which, for its vitriolic character, would have done honor to Jonathan Edwards himself:

The spirit of infidelity has the heart of a wolf, the fangs of a tiger, and the talons of a vulture. Blood is its proper nourish-

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 115-116.

² Addison. p. 181.

³ *Op. cit.* p. 19.

ment: and it scents its prey with the nerves of a hound, and cowers over the field of death on the sooty pinions of a fiend. Unlike all other animals of prey, it feeds upon its own kind; and, when glutted with the blood of others, turns back upon those, who have been its coadjutors, and who, if either its dispositions, or its measures, could admit of friendship, would have been its friends.¹

Professor N. W. Taylor, a personal friend, said of Dwight: "I think I never knew a man who took so deep an interest in everything, from the best mode of cultivating a cabbage, as well as the phenomena of the heavens or the employment of angels."² But of what avail was this catholicity of interest when it left the theocrat and the fanatical Puritan in the man untouched? He did a great deal for Yale, but all he did probably would have come about anyway. The founding of medical schools and of associations for the advancement of learning—these things were in the air, and any hack of a college president would have adopted them. It took no initiative to do so. But it did take considerable initiative and courage and insight to appreciate the cultural movements stirring the world at the time, to grasp their drift, and to direct the American people in the light of the best and most disinterested thought about them. Dwight was incapable of disinterested thought, despite all his learning and his vast intellectual contacts. He was a Calvinist from the first day the third daughter of Jonathan Edwards taught him the Bible, and he remained one to the end of his days. Age did not mellow him or drive him into the seclusion of the philosopher's garret, as it did the great metaphysician who was his grandfather. Age merely made him more rabid. When cancer finally put him to eternal rest he had just begun to sharpen his vocabulary of vituperation against "the spirit of infidelity [which] has the heart of a wolf, the fangs of a tiger, and the talons of a vulture." But the stream of history was against him.³

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 20.

² Quoted by Addison. p. 176.

³ Parrington, in Vol. I, p. 363, says: "A great college president Timothy Dwight may very well have been; he was worshipped by his admirers only this side of idolatry; but a great thinker, a steadfast friend of truth in whatever garb it might appear, a generous kindly soul loving even publicans and sinners, regardful of others and forgetful of self, he assuredly was not."

5. LEMUEL HOPKINS, THEODORE DWIGHT, DAVID HUMPHREYS, RICHARD ALSOP

The four lesser Hartford wits may be disposed of rapidly. Dr. Lemuel Hopkins was perhaps the most popular of them. He was the son of a Waterbury farmer. He studied medicine at Yale, and began practising in Litchfield in 1776. During the Revolution he served for a short time as a volunteer, but because of an hereditary predisposition to tuberculosis returned to medicine. He moved to Hartford in 1784, and spent the rest of his life there. He died in 1801, at the age of fifty-one. As a physician he was one of the leaders of his profession.

In politics he was extremely conservative, almost as much so as Timothy Dwight. He abhorred Republicanism like the plague, and French philosophy, to him, was the curse of God. It was he who prospected the plan of "The Anarchiad," and it was probably he who wrote its most vitriolic sections. His two pet hatreds were paper money and the State of Rhode Island, the chief user of such money. The following excerpt from No. III of "The Anarchiad," as Dr. Parrington thinks,¹ was very likely written by him:

*Hail! realm of rogues, renown'd for fraud and guile,
All hail! ye knav'ries of yon little isle.
There prowls the rascal, cloth'd with legal pow'r,
To snare the orphan, and the poor devour;
The crafty knave his creditor besets
And advertising paper pays his debts;
Bankrupts their creditors with rage pursue,
No stop, no mercy from the debtor crew.
Arm'd with new tests, the licens'd villain bold,
Presents his bills, and robs them of their gold;
Their ears, though rogues and counterfeiters lose,
No legal robber fears the gallows noose.
Look through the State, the unhallow'd ground appears
A pen of dragons, and a cave of bears;
A nest of vipers, mix'd with adders foul;
The screeching night-bird, and the greater owl:*

¹ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 365.

*For now, unrighteousness, a deluge wide,
Pours round the land an overwhelming tide;
And dark injustice, wrapp'd in paper sheets,
Rolls a dread torrent through the wasted streets;
While net of law th' unwary fry draws in
To damning deeds, and scarce they know their sin.*

Fortunately, Dr. Hopkins wrote very little verse or prose; he spent most of his time contributing to professional magazines.

Theodore Dwight (1764-1846), the cousin of Timothy, was a lawyer, and as one of the directors of the Eagle Bank of Hartford, a Federalist institution, he wrote against the chartering of Republican banks. David Humphreys (1752-1818) wrote songs and ballads during the Revolution. They are all forgotten now. He was one of the collaborators in "The Anarchiad." Richard Alsop (1761-1815) also wrote. He was a merchant.

The Hartford wits, for all their writing, did not produce a thing worth reading today. Of the Revolution they made a hodge-podge. If one searches long enough, and with a microscope, one may find a readable line in "M'Fingal," "The Columbiad," or "The Conquest of Canaan," but what honest critic today would deny that in the main they were rubbish? Some of the ballads and songs by the "smart ones" among the common soldiers were far better than these ponderous, blustering, bombastic "epics" by the leaders of thought at Yale.

That the Hartford wits had any influence on later literature, as Prof. Trent thinks,¹ is highly debatable. The literature of the Knickerbocker School, of the Philadelphia School, and of the New England Renaissance shows no trace of it. The Dwights and Barlows and Trumbulls came out of Calvinism and went into nothing. Their school was what might be called a literary sport. They left no beneficial trace anywhere, not even in Hartford and New Haven. Apparently, indeed, they cast a blight upon both towns, for neither has produced a writer even of their own calibre since their day.

¹ "A History of American Literature, 1607-1865," by W. P. Trent. N. Y. 1903. p. 135: "A careful study of the intellectual history of America shows that, though their manner was not followed, they had more influence on the development of a national literature than is often supposed."

6. ELISHA WILLIAMS'S DIARY OF 1776

Elisha Williams, who has been dealt with in the section dealing with the pre-Revolutionary pamphleteers, kept a diary while he was adjutant in Ward's Regiment. It contains general orders for the day, warnings, reports of court-martials, etc. It is an extremely valuable document, and parts of it make humorous reading. The entries cover the period from September 1 to November 2, 1776. Whether or not a discussion of it belongs in a literary history is debatable, but so interesting is it that I cannot resist the temptation to quote from it, especially since it was unearthed only in 1924 by W. Hyde Appleton, of Philadelphia, a great-grandson of the author.

One of the early entries shows that President Wilson was not the originator of the somewhat doubtful principle that idealism is good for the soldier.

Headquarters Sept. 3d 1776

The general hopes the justice of the great cause in which we are engag'd the necessity and importance of defending their country preserving the liberties & warding off the destruction meditated against it will inspire every man with firmness and resolution in time of action which is now approaching, ever remembering that upon the blessing of heaven and the bravery of the troop our country only can be sav'd—the general orders a return of every regiment to be made immediately & delivered to the brigadiers and commandants of brigades so that the brigade returns may be made by 12 o'Clock tomorrow.¹

Apparently the troops paid little attention to this appeal to their better selves, for on the next day there is this entry:

Head Quarters 4 th

Set. 1776

C Sign Shelburne

It is with amazement & concern the genneral finds that the men of every regiment are suffered to be constantly rambling about & at such distance from their respective quarters & incampments

¹ "Elisha Williams' Diary of 1776," edited by W. Hyde Appleton. *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography*. Phila. October, 1924. Vol. 48. pp. 334-353. January, 1925. Vol. 49. pp. 44-60. Vol. 48. p. 337.

as to render it impossible to collect them under arms in time to oppose the enemy on any sudden approach he therefore not only commands but earnestly recommends & Exhorts the Colonells & commanding officers of corps as they value their own reputation & the safety of the army and the good of the cause to put an immediate & effectual stop to such unsoldier like practices as one stop towards the accomplishment of which he orders the Rools to be called 3 times a day & that all those who shall be absent without leave be immediately punished.¹

The same complaint runs through the whole diary; indeed, it forms the major part of it. Occasionally a moral admonition is added, as witness:

Brigade Orders 27th Sepr. 1776

the commandant reminds the officers in his brigade that its absolutely against orders than any Card playing or other games of hazard should be practized in the army he is amazed that orders of all kinds are so little attended to. he will not overlook this breach of order in any officer or private for the future.²

Every now and then there is a return to the idealistic note.

Headquarters October 1, 1776

[The genneral] once more recommends to every officer & soldiers the importance of the cause we are engag'd in & the necessity there is of behaving like men who are Contending for every thing that freemen value,—he assures the whole that it is his fix'd determination to defend the posts we now hold to the last extremity & nothing but unparalled cowardice can occasion the loss of them as we are superiour in number and have a better cause to contend in than the enemy have he further declares that any spirited behaviour in officers and soldiers shall meet with its reward, at the same time that misbehaviour & Cowardice shall find exemplary punishment.³

But the soldiers, and even the officers, apparently didn't give a hoot whether their cause was better than the enemy's. They continued to

¹ Vol. 48. p. 338.

² *Ibid.* p. 349.

³ Vol. 49. pp. 44-45.

disobey orders, and occasionally seemed to have been extremely careless of the sanitary conditions of their surroundings. The "commands and recommendations" of the "genneral" to them on both points make pathetic reading:

Head quarters 2^d October 1776
C Sign Falmouth

It is with amazement & concern the gennl is inform'd that tho the new rules for the government of the army have been out some time they have not been gennerally read to the soldiers. certainly gentlemen do not reflect what prejudice it is to the Service to omitt so material a point of duty.¹

. . .

Headquarters 4th Octr 1776

The shameful inattention of some of the camps to cleanliness & decency in providing necessaries & picking up the offill & filth of the camps having been taken notice of before in genneral, after this time particular regiments will be pointed out by name when such practices prevail.²

Even such heart-rending appeals proved of no avail. The morale of the army got worse and worse. The officers took to stealing horses, and the soldiers to setting houses and barns afire.

Headquarters Octo. 31, 1776

It is with astonishment the genneral hears that some officers have taken up horses between the enemys camp & ours & sent them into the country for their private use, can it be possible that persons bearing Commissions & fighting in such a cause can degrade themselves into plundering of horses he hopes every officer will set his face against it in the future.

Headquarters Novr. 2d, 1776.
C Sign Sussex

The genneral expressly forbids any soldier or other belonging to the army to sett fire to any house or Barn on any pretence without a special order from a genneral officer.³

¹ *Ibid.* p. 45.

Ibid. p. 47.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 59, 60.

7. EZRA STILES'S DIARY AND "THE UNITED STATES ELEVATED TO GLORY AND HONOUR"

The divine who was president of Yale immediately before Timothy Dwight graced the office composed in 1783 a work entitled, "The United States elevated to Glory and Honour. A Sermon, Preached before His Excellency Jonathan Trumbull, Esq. LL.D., Governor & Commander in Chief, and the Honourable The General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, Convened at Hartford, at the Anniversary Election, May 8, 1783." It was published in New Haven in the same year. The pamphlet, though not written with any particular charm, makes interesting reading, and, moreover, illustrates very well the orgy of optimism that gripped the country immediately after the Revolution. America was hailed everywhere as the Queen of the world, and, indeed, of the universe. Barlow did it in verse in "The Columbiad," and so did Timothy Dwight in the song, "Columbia." Stiles voiced the same note in prose. "The population of this land," he says at the beginning of his sermon,

will probably become very great, and Japheth become more numerous millions in America than in Europe and Asia; and the two or three millions of the United States may equal the population of the oriental empires, which far surpasses that of Europe. There are reasons for believing that the English increase will far surpass others, and that the diffusion of the United States will ultimately produce the general population of America.¹

A bit later on he predicts that "within a century from our independence the sun will shine on 50,000,000 of inhabitants in the United States. This will be a great, a very great nation, nearly equal to half Europe."²

The sermon abounds in interesting bits of anthropological speculation, which recent research has proved to be almost as reliable as the aforementioned prophecy. For example:

¹ I am using here the version of the sermon printed in "The Pulpit of the American Revolution, or the Political Sermons of the Period of 1776. With a Historical Introduction, Notes and Illustrations," by John Wingate Thornton. Boston. 1860. pp. 397-520. This excerpt, p. 412.

² *Ibid.* pp. 439-440.

We may perceive that all the Americans [Indians] are one people—that they came hither certainly from the northeast of Asia; probably also from the Mediterranean; and if so, that they are Canaanites, though arriving hither by different routes.¹

Stiles was, of course, a democrat, though not of the Jeffersonian variety. He deplored² the separation of church and state as embodied in nearly all the State Constitutions, but he had some wise things to say, nevertheless, about the history of the struggle for popular rights. For instance:

Most of the states, of all ages, in their original, both as to policy and property, have been founded in rapacity, usurpation, and injustice; so that in the contests recorded in history, the public right is a dubious question,—it being rather certain that it belongs to neither of the contending parties,—the military history of all nations being but a description of the wars and invasions of the martial robbers and devastators of the human race. . . . The real interest of mankind, and the public good, has been generally overlooked. It has really been very indifferent to the great cause of right and liberty which of the belligerent powers prevailed, . . . tyranny being the sure portions of the plebeians, be the victory as it should happen. These things have led some very enlightened as well as serious minds to a fixed conclusion and judgment against the right and legality of all wars.³

The greater part of Stiles's Diary lies in MS. in the vaults of Yale University. Only three volumes of it have been published thus far. They were edited by Franklin Bowditch Dexter in 1901, and published by the Yale University Press. The Diary is of value to the historian and the biographer of Stiles, but as sheer reading matter it can hardly be compared to Pepys's great work, or even to Samuel Sewall's. There was no pawky humor in Stiles, and as a person he was pretty dull. He was the scholar pure and simple. To call him "the New England Evelyn,"⁴ as one writer has done, is absurd.

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 409-410.

² *Ibid.* pp. 487, 490, 491. This phase of his ideas has already been discussed in the section dealing with Revolutionary divines.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 412-414.

⁴ "Essays on Various Subjects," by John Andrew Doyle. Edited by W. P. Ker. London. 1911. p. 158. Almost as high praise is given Stiles in "The Eighteenth Century Diary of Ezra Stiles," by Charles Hopkins Clark. The *North American Review*. September, 1918. pp. 410-422.

Some of the entries for March, 1769, are these:

2. Read Chap. in Hebrew. And finished reading Eutychii Origines Ecclesiae Alexandrinæ in Arabic a third time. Wrote History, and made a Map of the Patent granted to the No. and So. Virginia Companies 1606. Read in Stith's History of Virginia, and Douglass' Summary. . . .

13. Latin Lett. to Univ^y Leyden.

14. Ray's Travels v, 2.

15. Arminii Opera.

16. Examined with the Jew priest Jacob's prophecy of the scepter departg from Judah. Read Eliot's Life in Dr. Mather's Magnalia. Most of this day with Jews.

18. Went to Synagogue with Mr. Austin: afterwards spent several hours in discourse with a romish Priest, a Knight of Jerusalem or Malta, travelling from Hispaniola to Quebec. He tells me there are in hispaniola 22 parishes, and 28 parishes between the Dominicans & Capuchins on french part of Hispaniola. That in all Canada, his native country, at the Surrendery, 1760, were One Hundred & sixty Thousand Souls French, and between three and four hundred Clergy.¹

There follows a long and minute description of the dedication of the new synagogue in New Haven, and a bit later comes an equally long and minute description of "the transit of Venus, which will not happen again in above an hundred years at either node."² Under the date of October 22, 1770, is this medley of Biblical criticism and philological prophecy:

This day I finished reading the Old Testament in the Original Hebrew, which I began to read in Course near three years ago, or Janry 30, 1768. I have all along compared the English & hebrew together, and am able from my own knowledge to say, that the English Translation now in use is an excellent & very just Translation & needs very few corrections. And was it again to be translated I cannot expect it would be better done. I have cursorily

¹ "The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D. D., LL.D., President of Yale College," edited under the authority of the corporation of Yale University, by Franklin Bowditch Dexter. 3 vols. Vol. I: January 1, 1769—March 13, 1776. This excerpt, Vol. I, pp. 5-6.

² *Ibid.* p. 12.

examined the late Quaker Translation, which is by no means equal to that in use; which was really made by *Tindall*: For tho' his Transl^a was burnt, yet I have seen one of *Tindall's* copies preserved in the Easton Family on Rhode Isld. & have compared the Great *Bishops* Bible, & find that *that* & K. James in use, are truly by *Revisions of Tyndall*. I do not wish to see another English Transl^a, till the English Dialect of the last two Ages shall have become obsolete & untilligible to posterity. But this will not be till English America is fully settled from the Atlantic to Mississippi, When the English of the present Idiom may be spoken by One hundred Million, all of whom may be able to read the Scriptures in Tyndall's Translation.

Probably the English will become the vernacular Tongue of more People than anyone Tongue ever was on Earth, except the Chinese, who are above one Quarter of the human Race, being seventy million fencible Men, implying above Two Hundred & Fifty Million souls.¹

Obviously Stiles was not a man of inferior literary tastes. For one of his training he also had a very catholic mind — almost a fair mind, as witness this entry under May 29, 1771:

Finished read^s Voltairs profane Philos. Dictionary. He has some instructive Remarks.²

Imagine Cotton Mather making such a concession!

Stiles was not a scientist, but he had a good deal of the scientist's curiosity in him. One instance of it is especially interesting. It appears under the date of October 13, 1774:

At VII^h 21' this Evening We felt a Shock of an Earthquake. The sound like the Discharge of a Canon at first but more continuous and the tremulous motion *different* & longer. I was in my Study writing a Letter to Dr. Flagg of Esquibo, and the Duration was while I was writing about one Line. I immediately looked on my Clock, which I had compared with the merid. the noon of this day, & found it not 22' after VII^h. I find I write a Line in about 20 seconds. Perhaps the Duration of the Earthquake was half

¹ *Ibid.* p. 73.

² *Ibid.* p. 106.

a minute. It was calm still serene, Noon on the meridian at ten minutes after the Earthquake as I observed it carefully. Wonderful the displays of divine Omnipotence!¹

The second volume of the Yale edition of the Diary runs from March 14, 1776, up to and including December 31, 1781. The third begins with January 1, 1782, and ends with May 6, 1795. Both deal in the main with politics, and are full of transcripts of letters Stiles received from his friends in the other Colonies.

Of the other Connecticut writers Oliver Arnold and Jonathan Carver are the only ones worth mentioning. The first wrote considerable Revolutionary verse, but it is all justly forgotten now. Carver was born in Connecticut some time in the third decade of the Eighteenth Century. He set out in 1766 on an extensive tour of the New World, reaching as far as the Mississippi, and returning in 1768. Ten years later there was published in London what was then thought to be his own story of his "Travels through the interior parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767 and 1768." It became immediately popular, and was translated into French, German and Dutch. Recent investigation has proved that the bulk of the "Travels" was a close paraphrase of James Adair's "History of the American Indians," and two other less well known books.² Carver also had his name attached to two other books: "The New Universal Traveller" (London, 1779) and "A Treatise on the Culture of the Tobacco Plant" (Dublin, 1779).

¹ "The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., President of Yale College." Dexter edition. Vol. I. pp. 463-464.

² See "The Travels of Jonathan Carver," a review, by E. G. Bourne, in the *American Historical Review*, Lancaster, Pa., for January, 1906. Vol. 11. No. 2. pp. 287-302. Tyler's remark, in Vol. I, p. 150, that the "Travels" "is of unsurpassed value," can now apply only to the legend that the Carver book inspired Schiller's "Nadwessiers Totenlied."

CHAPTER VIII

Prose and Verse
In the Other New England Colonies

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In the Other New England Colonies

I. ABIGAIL ADAMS

ABIGAIL ADAMS WAS THE WIFE OF ONE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED States, John Adams, and the mother of another, John Quincy Adams. But her interest to the literary historian lies in a somewhat different direction. She was the author of some of the most interesting and valuable letters in the history of the Republic, letters which frequently reach the heights of real literature. She was born in Weymouth, Mass., on November 11, 1744, was married to John Adams on October 25, 1764, and died on October 28, 1818.¹ She came from old Puritan stock, and among her forbears numbered such celebrated divines as John Norton and Thomas Shepard. Her father was also a minister, and a very learned one, but as a child she obtained little more education than girls less fortunate. One year before her death she wrote:

My early education did not partake of the abundant opportunities which the present days offer, and which even our common country schools now afford. *I never was sent to any school.* I was always sick. Female education, in the best families, went no further than writing and arithmetic; in some few and rare instances, music and dancing.²

John Adams first left home in August, 1774, when he went to Philadelphia to attend the first Continental Congress, and it was then that the amazing correspondence between him and his wife began.

¹ The best biography of her is by her grandson, Charles Francis Adams, prefaced to his two volume edition of the letters, published in Boston in 1840. The substance of the biography appears as an introductory memoir to his edition of "Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife Abigail Adams. During the Revolution." Boston, 1875.

² "Familiar Letters." p. xi.

He was away from home on public business during the greater part of the following fifteen years. She kept a close watch on all that was happening in Boston and vicinity, and wrote about everything to her husband. Meanwhile she brought up his four children. The family purse was always small, the children were generally ill, and she was constantly worried about the whereabouts of her husband, but before she died she was the pride of her town and the glory of the nation.

Her letters were a public treasure even in her day; there were many requests to have them published.¹ Of her own writing she said: "*Style* I never studied. My language is the spontaneous effusions of friendship."² Her letters were more than spontaneous; they were wise and kindly, and revealed one of the grandest souls in the annals of the Republic. The following letter, dated August 14, 1776, she wrote to her husband in Philadelphia:

Your letter of August 3 came by this day's post. I find it very convenient to be so handy. I can receive a letter at night, sit down and reply to it, and send it off in the morning.

You remark upon the deficiency of education in your countrymen. It never, I believe, was in a worse state, at least for many years. The college is not in the state one could wish. The scholars complain that their professor in philosophy is taken off by public business, to their great detriment. In this town I never saw so great a neglect of education. The poorer sort of children are wholly neglected, and left to range the streets, without schools, without business, given up to all evil. The town is not, as formerly, divided into wards. There is either too much business left upon the hands of a few, or too little care to do it. We daily see the necessity of a regular government.

You speak of our worthy brother. I often lament it, that a man so peculiarly formed for the education of youth, and so well qualified as he is in many branches of literature, excelling in philosophy and the mathematics, should not be employed in some public station. I know not the person who would make half so good a successor to Dr. Winthrop. He has a peculiar, easy manner of communicating his ideas to youth; and the goodness of his heart and the purity of his morals, without an affected austerity, must have a happy effect upon the minds of pupils.

¹ "Familiar Letters." pp. xxxi-xxxii.

² *Ibid.* p. xxxii.

If you complain of neglect of education in sons, what shall I say with regard to daughters, who every day experience the want of it? With regard to the education of my own children, I find myself soon out of my depth, destitute and deficient in every part of education.

I most sincerely wish that some more liberal plan might be laid and executed for the benefit of the rising generation, and that our new Constitution may be distinguished for encouraging learning and virtue. If we mean to have heroes, statesmen, and philosophers, we should have learned women. The world perhaps would laugh at me and accuse me of vanity, but you, I know, have a mind too enlarged and liberal to disregard the sentiment. If much depends, as is allowed, upon the early education of youth, and the first principles which are instilled take the deepest root, great benefit must arise from literary accomplishments in women.¹

The letter below she wrote to her husband while he was in France in 1779, helping Benjamin Franklin in his mission to obtain the friendship and credit of that country. It is dated June 8.

Six months have already elapsed since I heard a syllable from you or my dear son [John Quincy], and five since I have had one single opportunity of conveying a line to you. Letters of various dates have lain months at the Navy Board, and a packet and frigate, both ready to sail at an hour's warning, have been months waiting the orders of Congress. They no doubt have their reasons, or ought to have, for detaining them. I must patiently wait their motions, however painful it is; and that it is so, your own feelings will testify. Yet I know not but you are less a sufferer than you would be to hear from us, to know our distresses, and yet be unable to relieve them. The universal cry for bread, to a humane heart, is painful beyond description, and the great price demanded and given for it verifies that pathetic passage of Sacred Writ, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." Yet He who miraculously fed a multitude with five loaves and two fishes has graciously interposed in our favor, and delivered many of the enemy's supplies into our hands, so that

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 212-213.

our distresses have been mitigated. I have been able as yet to supply my own family, sparingly, but at a price that would astonish you. Corn is sold at four dollars, hard money, per bushel, which is equal to eighty at the rate of exchange. . . .

In contemplation of my situation, I am sometimes thrown into an agony of distress. Distance, dangers, and oh, I cannot name all the fears which sometimes oppress me, and harrow up my soul. Yet must the common lot of man one day take place, whether we dwell in our own native land or are far distant from it. That we rest under the shadow of the Almighty is the consolation to which I resort, and find that comfort which the world cannot give. If He sees best to give me back my friend, or to preserve my life to him, it will be so.¹

Finally, I quote a letter, which, for sheer human feeling and wifely and motherly solicitation, is one of the high marks in American letters. The war was over, and John Adams was in The Netherlands negotiating a loan for the new nation. Abigail writes to him as of October 25, 1782.

My dearest Friend,—The family are all retired to rest; the busy scenes of the day are over; a day which I wished to have devoted in a particular manner to my dearest friend; but company falling in prevented it, nor could I claim a moment until this silent watch of the night.

Look (is there a dearer name than *friend*? Think of it for me), look to the date of this letter, and tell me what are the thoughts which arise in your mind. Do you not recollect that eighteen years have run their circuit since we pledged our mutual faith to each other, and the hymeneal torch was lighted at the altar of Love? Yet, yet it burns with unabating fervor. Old Ocean has not quenched it, nor old Time smothered it in this bosom. It cheers me in the lonely hour; it comforts me even in the gloom which sometimes possesses my mind.

It is, my friend, from the remembrance of the joys I have lost, that the arrow of affliction is pointed. I recollect the untitled man to whom I gave my heart, and in the agony of recollection, when time and distance present themselves together, wish he had never been any other. Who shall give me back time? Who

¹ "Familiar Letters." pp. 364-366.

shall compensate to me those years I cannot recall? How dearly have I paid for a titled husband! Should I wish you less wise, that I might enjoy more happiness? I cannot find that in my heart. Yet Providence has wisely placed the real blessings of life within the reach of moderate abilities; and he who is wiser than his neighbor sees so much more to pity and lament, that I doubt whether the balance of happiness is in his scale.

I feel a disposition to quarrel with a race of beings who have cut me off, in the midst of my days, from the only society I delighted in. "Yet no man liveth for himself," says an authority I will not dispute. Let me draw satisfaction from this source, and, instead of murmuring and repining at my lot, consider it in a more pleasing view. Let me suppose that the same gracious Being who first smiled upon our union, and blessed us in each other, endowed my friend with powers and talents for the benefit of mankind, and gave him a willing mind to improve them for the service of his country. You have obtained honor and reputation at home and abroad. Oh, may not an inglorious peace wither the laurels you have won!¹

2. SUSANNA HASWELL ROWSON

The Revolution, as has already been pointed out, somehow paralyzed the literary sense of Massachusetts. A strange sort of exhaustion gripped the erstwhile prolific Colony. The political pamphleteering of the thirty years prior to the war sapped its psychic energy, and it lost its cultural leadership to Connecticut. Nevertheless, considerable writing was done within its borders, and though it was not as pretentious as that done in Hartford or New Haven, it was surely not much worse in quality. The difference was really infinitesimal.

Of the Massachusetts authors the one who created the greatest sensation was unquestionably Mrs. Susanna Haswell Rowson. She was born in Portsmouth, Hampshire, England, in 1762.² She was the only daughter of Captain William Haswell of the English Navy. She was brought to this country in 1767, when her father, a fairly wealthy man by that time, settled in Nantasket. She was a precocious child. She

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 405-406.

² For my biographical material I rely on "A Memoir of Mrs. Susanna Rowson, With Elegant and Illustrative Extracts From Her Writings in Prose and Poetry," by Elias Nason. Albany. 1870.

IN VAIN IS THE VERDURE OF SPRING

1.

*Restrained from the sight of my dear,
No object with pleasure I see,
Though thousands around me appear,
The world's but a desert to me.*

2.

*In vain is the verdure of spring,
The trees look so blooming and gay;
The birds as they whistle and sing
Delight not when William's away.*

3.

*Reclined by a soft murmuring stream,
I weeping disburthen my care;
I tell to the rocks my sad theme
Whose echo soothes not my despair.*

4.

*Ye streams that soft murmuring flow,
Convey to my love every tear:
Ye rocks that resound with my woe,
Repeat my complaints in his ear.¹*

Mrs. Rowson was on the stage for a while longer, but she left it in 1797, and founded a girls' school in Federal street, Boston. In 1799 she "introduced a piano-forte into her school room, an event which constitutes an era in the progress of music in Boston, where the instrument was then almost entirely unknown."² On October 30, 1802, the Boston *Weekly Gazette* was founded, and Mrs. Rowson was made its editor. The magazine lived for three years, and then was superseded by the somewhat more pretentious *Monthly Anthology*, edited by William Tudor. Mrs. Rowson contributed numerous articles to

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 75-76.

² *Ibid.* p. 98.

the *Gazette* in the manner of the *Spectator* — on education, music, books, manners, etc.

In 1804 was published "Miscellaneous Poems, by Susanna Rowson, Preceptress of the Ladies' Academy, Newton, Mass." It was 227 pages long, and was favorably reviewed in the *Monthly Anthology*, Volume I, p. 611. Then came more poems, texts, novels, songs, and almost every other form of writing. She wrote considerably for the *New England Galaxy*, which was founded in 1817. She died on March 2, 1824, at the age of sixty-three. Four years later appeared the posthumous "Charlotte's Daughter, or the Three Orphans; a Sequel to Charlotte Temple."

Mrs. Rowson was probably the first American author to have a novel serialized before publication. "Sarah, or the Exemplary Wife," which was published in book form in Boston in 1813, was run in instalments in the Boston *Weekly Gazette* about eight years before. As for the story itself, Mrs. Rowson says in her preface that she offers the book "to the public as an example of how much the human mind can bear, when supported by conscious rectitude, and whose every impulse is conformable to the strictest integrity and a love of truth."¹ Later on she exclaims: "Beware, ye lovely maidens who are now fluttering on the wing of youth and pleasure, how you select a partner for life. Purity of morals and manners in a husband, is absolutely necessary to the happiness of a delicate and virtuous woman. When once the choice is made and fixed beyond revocation, remember patience, forbearance, and in many cases perfect silence, is the only way to secure domestic peace. What, in all marriages? asks some young friend. Why, in truth, there is seldom any so perfectly felicitous, but that instances may occur where patience, forbearance, and silence, may be practiced with good effect."²

Mrs. Rowson's poetry can be dismissed rapidly. It was rubbish, though immensely popular. The prolific scribbler had this to say in her

HYMN TO THE DEITY

*Alpha Omega, first and last,
Creative spirit, power supreme,
Whose hand directs the stormy blast,
Or gilds the morning's orient beam;*

¹ *Op. cit.* p. i.

² *Op. cit.* p. iv.

*Who spoke, and from chaotic night
 Unnumber'd worlds and systems rose;
 Whose word is life — whose presence, light —
 Whose smiles are health, content, repose;*

*Where dost thou dwell? Thy throne, how high?
 Where hast thou fix'd thy dwelling place;
 Can finite wishes ever fly
 E'en to the footstool of thy grace?*

. . .

*Ten thousand insects chant thy praise;
 Ten thousand worlds thy power declare;
 None from thine eye can hide his ways,
 For Thou art present every where.*

*Then teach the atom thou has made
 To trust and hope thy mercy still;
 To fear thy wrath, to seek thy aid,
 To love thy laws, and do thy will.¹*

Of the night she exclaims:

*Beneath thy covert while the many sleep,
 The wretched may, unseen, uncensur'd, weep;
 And forc'd all day with smiles to hide their woe,
 Blest night! conceal'd by thee, the tears may flow,
 The highest luxury the tortured heart can know.²*

"Charlotte Temple, or A Tale of Truth," as has been said, was Mrs. Rowson's most popular novel. It has gone through at least 104 editions, and is still sold to the free American citizens of all the United States.³ Of the twenty-four books and plays that she wrote "Char-

¹ "Miscellaneous Poems," by Susanna Rowson. Boston. 1804. pp. 55-58.

² *Ibid.* p. 136.

³ "Charlotte Temple, A Tale of Truth," by Susanna Haswell Rowson. Reprinted from the Rare First American Edition (1794), over 1200 errors in the later editions being corrected, and the preface restored. With an Historical and Biographical Introduction, Bibliography, etc., by Francis W. Halsey. N. Y. 1905. p. cvii. A complete bibliography of Mrs. Rowson's works appears here on pp. xcvi-cvii.

lotte Temple" alone has survived. "But what a survival that has been! . . . Among books of that generation it is probably matched in this country only by Franklin's 'Autobiography,' if indeed that book has matched it. Among novels it had no rival in its own day—not even 'Evelina' or 'The Children of the Abbey.' None of Scott's novels, which came a generation later, could have had so wide a reading here. Not until 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' appeared did an American work of fiction dispute its preëminence in point of circulation."¹

The book was not protected by copyright, and therefore Mrs. Rowson did not profit by the wide popularity of her work. It appeared in nearly every size: 18mo, 16mo, 12mo, and 8vo. A translation of it was made into German, and a play based on the story was very popular for a time. "Charlotte" sold 25,000 copies in England within a few years after its first appearance. This in the time of William Cowper, Fanny Burney, Hannah More, Mrs. Radcliffe, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Anna Letitia Barbauld! The mob of both Continents gobbled the book, but the intelligent reading public and the critics passed it by completely. Occasional articles have been written about the tombstone of Charlotte Temple in the graveyard of Trinity Church, New York City, but "the book has seldom called forth an article. One of the most widely read novels in the English language, and probably one of the most talked about, it still remains one of the least written about."² The two leading book news magazines of London—the *Monthly Review* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*—did not even mention it.

The plot of the story is a very simple one. The hero, Montraville, a British Army officer, persuades the pretty Charlotte Temple to run away with him to New York, where he abandons her with her unborn child. Mrs. Rowson claimed that the book was founded on fact. Its purpose is expressed thus in the preface:

If the following tale should save one hapless fair one from the errors which ruined poor Charlotte, or rescue from impending misery the heart of one anxious parent, I shall feel a much higher gratification in reflecting on this trifling performance than could possibly result from the applause which might attend the most

¹ "Charlotte Temple, A Tale of Truth," by Susanna Haswell Rowson. Halsey edition. pp. xxix-xxx.

² *Ibid.* p. lxvii.

elegant, finished piece of literature whose tendency might deprave the heart or mislead the understanding.¹

The following excerpt, a typical one, is from Chapter XII, Volume I. Charlotte is wavering before the alluring pleading of Montraville. She is thinking of her parents and of the birthday party they are planning for her. The chapter is entitled, "How Thou Art Fall'n!"

"Now," said Montraville, taking Charlotte in his arms, "you are mine forever."

"No," said she, withdrawing from his embrace; "I am come to take an everlasting farewell."

It would be useless to repeat the conversation that here ensued; suffice it to say, that Montraville used every argument that had formerly been successful, Charlotte's resolution began to waver, and he drew her almost imperceptibly toward the chaise.

"I cannot go," said she, "cease, dear Montraville, to persuade. I must not: religion, duty forbid."

"Cruel Charlottel!" said he, "if you disappoint my ardent hopes, by all that is sacred! this hand shall put a period to my existence. I can not—will not—live without you."

"Alas! my torn heart!" said Charlotte, "how shall I act?"

"Let me direct you," said Montraville, lifting Charlotte into the chaise.

"Oh! my dear, forsaken parents!" cried Charlotte.

The chaise drove off. She shrieked and fainted into the arms of her betrayer.²

Only Mrs. Rowson's biographer, the Rev. Elias Nason, has taken "Charlotte Temple" seriously. He thinks that "it appeals to the tenderest sentiments of the human heart, and sweeps across the chords of feeling as the evening breeze across the strings of the Æolian harp."³ In another place he says: "The common mind of the common people is after all the true arbiter of the merit of the works of genius. This sanctions Homer, Shakespeare, Le Sage, Cervantes, Bunyan, Burns, Goldsmith; this sanctions 'The Aminta,' 'The Gentle Shepherd,' 'Paul et Virginie,' 'Charlotte Temple'; this sanctions

¹ *Ibid.* p. 5.

² *Ibid.* pp. 95-96.

³ Nason. pp. 47-48.

'Guy Mannering' and 'The Pilot'; this sanctions power."¹ This classic of American criticism was written in 1870!

How did Mrs. Rowson happen to write the book? She was an actress for seven years, and at a time when the worst was expected of those who practiced her profession, and yet she was apparently horrified by scenes of seduction. Why? What of her stay in Paris? Did her unhappy marital life have any bearing on her novels? These questions must remain unanswered until we learn more about her life. The biography by the Rev. Elias Nason is obviously incompetent. A better hand ought to tackle it. It is well worth the time. The influence of "Charlotte Temple" on the reading habits of the American people must have been momentous. An expression of Puritanism, it also reinforced it mightily. And doing so, it gained the approval, at one time or another, of personages no less lofty than Martha Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Mrs. Siddons, and Samuel Adams.

3. PHILLIS WHEATLEY

A woman who was almost as popular as Mrs. Rowson, though in a somewhat different way, was Phillis Wheatley, the first Negro literata in the history of the United States. She was a native of Africa, and was brought to this country in 1761, when she was sold as a slave to John Wheatley, a Boston merchant, and already the owner of a number of slaves.² At the time of the purchase she was about seven years old. She showed marked intelligence from the beginning, and as a result was accorded special favors by her mistress, who made her a sort of superintendent of the other slaves. "As Phillis increased in years, the development of her mind realized the promise of her childhood: and she soon attracted the attention of the literati of the day, many of whom furnished her with books."³ In 1770, at the age of sixteen, she was received as a member of the church worshipping in the Old South Meeting House, an unheard of honor for a Negro in those days. "She was very gentle-tempered, extremely affectionate and altogether free

¹ Nason. p. 51.

² For my biographical material I rely in the main on the anonymous sketch in "Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, Native African and a Slave. Dedicated to the Friends of the Africans." Second edition. Boston. 1835. On page 36 the author says of herself that she is "a collateral descendant of Mrs. Wheatley, and has been familiar with the name and fame of Phillis Wheatley from her childhood."

³ *Ibid.* p. 12.

from that most despicable foible, which might naturally have been her besetting sin — literary vanity.”¹

She knew Latin, and read books on astronomy, geography, ancient and modern history, and was thoroughly acquainted with the Bible, heathen mythology, Pope and Homer. When she started to write verse is unknown. “She must have commenced her career as an author-ess as soon as she could write a legible hand, and without being acquainted with the rules of composition. Indeed, we very much doubt if she ever had any grammatical instruction, or any knowledge of the structure and idiom of the English language, except what she imbibed from a perusal of the best English writers.”²

In 1773, because of ill health (tuberculosis), she was taken to England by a son of the Wheatleys. She was received by society there, and dedicated her book of poems to the Countess of Huntingdon. She returned to Boston in 1774, because of the illness of her mistress. Mrs. Wheatley died in the same year, and was followed shortly thereafter by her husband and daughter. Phillis was thus left without a home, and since the Revolution was on she was deserted by her former friends. She married a Boston Negro grocer, one John Peters, who was apparently a failure in business and not much good as a husband.³ She became the mother of his three children. Two of them died in infancy, and the third was buried with her on December 5, 1784.

She was one of the literary marvels of her day. George Washington wrote to her on February 28, 1776, acknowledging the receipt of the book of her poems: “If you should ever come to Cambridge, or near headquarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favored by the Muses, and to whom nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations.”⁴ This was a fine show of politeness, but hardly one of sober critical judgment. The poems are really extremely mediocre. An example:

¹ *Ibid.* p. 15.

² *Ibid.* p. 19.

³ Such is the legend, but very little is really known about John Peters. Josiah Quincy said that Peters at one time practiced law, or professed to, and that he met him in the court-room. “Letters of Phillis Wheatley, The Negro-Slave Poet of Boston,” edited by Charles Deane. Boston. Privately printed. 1864. p. 19.

⁴ The anonymous memoir. pp. 36-37.

On Being Brought From Africa to America

'Twas mercy brought me from my pagan land,
 Taught my benighted soul to understand
 That there's a God—that there's a Saviour too:
 Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.

*Some view our sable race with scornful eye—
 'Their color is a diabolic dye.'
 Remember, Christians, Negroes black as Cain
 May be refined, and join the angelic train.*¹

The following "Hymn to the Evening" is just as bad:

*Soon as the sun forsook the eastern main,
 The pealing thunder shook the heavenly plain;
 Majestic grandeur! From the Zephyr's wing,
 Exhales the incense of the blooming spring.
 Soft purl the streams, the birds renew their notes,
 And through the air their mingled music floats.*

*Through all the heavens what beautiful dyes are spread,
 But the west glories in the deepest red:
 So may our breasts with ev'ry virtue glow
 The living temples of our God below!*

*Filled with the praise of him who gives the light,
 And draws the sable curtains of the night,
 Let placid slumbers soothe each weary mind,
 At morn to wake, more heavenly, more refined;
 So shall the labours of the day begin
 More pure, more guarded from the snares of sin.
 Night's leaden sceptre seals my drowsy eyes
 Then cease my song, till fair Aurora rise.*²

The book is full of funeral poems, poems celebrating the recovery of ladies' health, etc. Some of the titles of these are "A Funeral Poem

¹ The anonymous memoir. p. 48.

² *Ibid.* p. 73.

on the Death of C. E., an infant of twelve months," "Ode to Neptune: On Mrs. W—'s Voyage to England," "To A Lady: on her coming to North America with her Son, for the recovery of her health," "To a Gentleman and Lady, on the death of the Lady's Brother and Sister, and a Child of the name of Avis, aged one year," and "To a Lady on her remarkable Preservation in an Hurricane in North Carolina."

4. ROBERT TREAT PAINE

His Christian name was Thomas, but on account of the bad repute of the celebrated "atheist" of Philadelphia of the same name, he early had it changed to the name of his father, Robert Treat Paine, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He was born in Taunton in 1773, and was graduated from Harvard with distinction in 1792. He was a lawyer, an editor, a poet and a dramatic critic. He was, "for ten or fifteen years, considered the first poet of the United States."¹ He wrote nothing of considerable length, but for what he did write he was paid sums that would be amazing even in these days. For "Adams and Liberty," which was seventy-five lines long, and which had an enormous circulation in this country and in England, he received no less than ten dollars a line!² It was set, as was "The Star Spangled Banner," to the popular English drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven." For "The Ruling Passion," a poem which he read at the Harvard chapter of the Phi Beta Kappa society in 1797, he got \$1200, and for "The Invention of Letters," which he delivered at the Harvard Commencement in 1795, he got \$1500. The Bostonians of the time, obviously, were, as modern advertising copy writers would put it, poetry-conscious. "No previous writer had received such substantial recognition. Probably for the first time in our history, literature met with extraordinary financial returns."³

Paine's troubles began in 1793 when he married a sixteen-year-old actress, and was immediately disowned by his father. He took to drink and to adultery, and died in 1811, in his thirty-eighth year. In 1808 he contributed dramatic reviews to a Boston weekly miscellany, the

¹ "Lectures on American Literature, With Remarks on Some Passages of American History," by Samuel L. Knapp. N. Y. 1829. pp. 176-177.

² *Ibid.* p. 177.

³ "History of American Verse," by James L. Onderdonk. Chicago. 1901. p. 110.

Times. "They were written with great care and a fine showing of scholarship."¹ He laid great stress on pronunciation, enunciation, and the fitting emphasis. He did much to disabuse Boston of its preposterous idea that the theatre was the House of Satan. Says Philip Hale:

One of the most prominent dramatic critics of the early years was Robert Treat Paine, who wrote: "We are deeply impressed with the belief that the theatre is highly important to society as a great public school, in which all classes may assemble, to acquire mutual respect from examples of good breeding, to cultivate morality from the delineations of life, to enliven social humor from the vivacity of fiction, and to imbibe correct ideas of classical reading, and of our native tongue from striking instances, however rare, of the force of elocution and purity of pronunciation."²

Paine was the only poet of note produced by Harvard from 1770 to 1800. He was not a distinguished poet. He was not even of Joel Barlow's class. Pomposity, affectation, and forced wit were his chief vices, and frequently he sank into cheap sentimentalism. The only poem of his that is at all readable today is "The Ruling Passion." The following excerpt is the high mark in it:

*Life is a print-shop, where the eye may trace
A different outline, mark'd in evert face;
From chiefs, who laurels reap in fields of blood,
Down to the hind, who tills those fields for food;
From the lorn nymph, in cloister'd abbey pent,
Whose friars teach to love, and to repent;
To the young captive in the Haram's bower,
Blest for a night, and empress of an hour;
From ink's retailers, perch'd in garret high,
Cobweb'd around with many a mouldy lie;
Down to the pauper's brat, who, luckless wight!
Deep in the cellar first receiv'd the light;
All, all impell'd — as various passions move,
To write, to starve — to conquer, or to love!*

¹ "A Boston Dramatic Critic of a Century Ago," by Philip Hale. The Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings, 1925-1926. Vol. 59. May, 1926. Boston. 1926. pp. 312-324. p. 322.

² *Ibid.* p. 317.

*All join to shift life's versicolor'd scenes,
 Priests, poets, fiddlers—courtesans and queens:
 And be it pride, or dress, or wealth, or fame,
 The acting principle is ne'er the same.
 Each takes a different rout, o'er hill or vale,
 The tangled forest, or the greensward dale.
 But they, who chiefly crowd the field, are those,
 Who live by fashion—constables and beaux,
 That first, I ween, are men of high report,
 The law's staff-officers, and known at court.
 The last, sweet elves, whose rival graces vie,
 To wield the snuff-box, or enact a sigh,
 To Fashion's gossamer their lives devote,
 The frize, the cane, the cravat and the coat.
 In taste unpolish'd, yet in ton precise,
 They sleep at theatres, and wake at dice;
 While, like the pilgrim's scrip, or soldier's pack,
 They carry all their fortune on their back.¹*

John Neal, in 1823, said that Paine's verse, "two or three times during his life, was inspiration."² This was about right. If Paine is remembered a hundred years from today, it will probably be for two things only: for the high prices he commanded for his verses, and for his amateurish, but at the time, useful dramatic criticism. Not for the charm or power of his poetry.

5. HANNAH ADAMS

Of all the professional women writers in this period of New England history Hannah Adams was by far the most interesting. She was born in 1755 in Medfield, eighteen miles from Boston.³ She came from a family of invalids. Her mother died when Hannah was ten. Her father was a failure in business, so she was thrown on her own resources

¹ "The Ruling Passion: An Occasional Poem. Written By the Appointment of the Society of φ B K, and Spoken, on their Anniversary, in the Chapel of the University, Cambridge, July 20, 1797," by Thomas Paine. Boston. 1797. pp. 8-9.

² Quoted by Hale. p. 319.

³ For the biographical facts I am indebted to the charming "Memoir of Miss Hannah Adams, Written by Herself, With Additional Notices, by a Friend." Boston. 1832. The autobiographical section occupies the first 43 pages.

while still a child. She was too sickly to go to school, so she did all her reading by herself. Thus she learned Greek, Latin, ancient and modern history, and theology. The latter subject interested her immensely, and she soon began work on what she hoped would be the first really fair history of all religions. Her "View of Religions" was published in 1784, after a great deal of trouble in obtaining a printer, and when she finally got one he duped her. The second edition appeared in 1791, "and the emolument I derived from it not only placed me in a comfortable situation, but enabled me to pay the debts I had contracted during mine and my sister's illness, and to put a small sum upon interest."¹

Then she started on another book, "A Summary History of New England," a text for schools and the general public. The only comprehensive histories obtainable at the time were Cotton Mather's "Magnalia" and Neale's "History," but they did not cover the later period. Miss Adams almost went blind with reading for her book. "It was poverty, not ambition," she says in her frank and appealing way, "or vanity, that first induced me to become an author, or rather a compiler. . . . I selected this subject, rather for public utility, than for my own gratification. . . . I knew the work would require much reading upon dry subjects, such as ancient news prints, state papers, &c. But I wrote for a bare subsistence, and never wished to gain anything from the public which I had not at least earned by laborious investigation."² The history was published in 1799. Five years later she put out a concise "View of the Christian Religion," a collection of opinions selected from the writings of eminent laymen. Then "I formed the design of writing the history of the Jews, though I was sensible that it would require much reading, and that I must wander through a dreary wilderness, unenlivened by one spot of verdure."³

About this time Josiah Quincy, Stephen Higginson, and William Shaw settled an annuity upon her. This was a great boon to "the very nervous, diffident, vastly learned and vastly industrious" old maid. She cut down her literary output,⁴ and died in Brookline on November 15, 1831, at the age of seventy-seven.

¹ "Memoir of Miss Hannah Adams, Written by Herself, With Additional Notices, by a Friend." Boston. 1830. p.21.

² *Ibid.* pp. 22-23.

³ *Ibid.* p. 32.

⁴ She wrote two other books after the annuity was settled upon her: "An Abridgement of the History of New England, For the Use of Young Persons," 1806; and "A Dictionary of all Religions and Religious Denominations, Jewish, Heathen, Mahometan, and Christian, Ancient

6. JOSEPH BROWN LADD

In the field of *belles lettres* Rhode Island has only a little more to show than Arkansas. I am not thinking of Roger Williams, of course. The only poet of any pretensions that the Colony ever produced was Joseph Brown Ladd. He was born in Newport, R. I., in 1764.¹ He obtained very little formal education in his youth. His father was very poor, and there was no compulsory public education in Rhode Island at the time. He was therefore forced to study by himself. In this way he learned the Bible, mathematics, Latin, history, and geography. His first poem he wrote at the age of ten. It was entitled "An Invocation to the Almighty." If Cotton Mather were alive, how envious he would have been! And Jonathan Edwards, too. The poem follows in full:

*An Invocation To the Almighty**Written at the Age of Ten Years*

*My God! the Father of mankind,
Whose bounty all things share;
Let me thy grace my portion find—
All else beneath thy care.*

*I ask not titles, wealth, or state,
By joyless hearts possessed;
Yet may I still be rich and great,
If virtue fill my breast.*

*Let fervent charity remain
Forever in my breast;
Oh! let me feel another's pain,
In other's joys be blest.*

and Modern. With an Appendix, Containing A Sketch of the Present State of the World, as to Population, Religion, Toleration, Missions, etc. and the Articles in which all Christian Denominations Agree," 1813.

¹ For my biographical facts I rely on the brief memoir in "The Literary Remains of Joseph Brown Ladd, M.D. Collected by His Sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Haskins of Rhode Island. To Which is Prefixed, A Sketch of the Author's Life, by B. W. Chittenden." N. Y. 1832.

*To charity within my breast,
Let steady faith unite;
Nor let me from thy law depart,
Nor let me live by sight.*

*With patience fortify my mind,
To bear each future ill;
In life, and death, alike resigned
To this unerring will.¹*

For a time young Joseph worked as a farmer, a store clerk, and a helper in a printing shop. He attacked the great Dr. Lemuel Hopkins in a broadside, so he was thrown out of the printing shop. He was then received into the family of Dr. Isaac Senter, a distinguished physician and surgeon of Newport, to study medicine. All the time he read almost everything he could put his hands on: Locke, the Greek and Latin classics, Hebrew and French, and the English poets. He wrote poetry for the newspapers under the pen-name of Arouet, in good Della Cruscan fashion. He also composed a large number of love letters in rhyme to "Amanda." She was a real person, an orphan heiress. Her guardians objected to Ladd's advances, but he and she were privately engaged, and the secret betrothal lasted until his death. In 1783 Ladd got his license to practise medicine, and upon the advice of Gen. Nathaniel Greene went to Charleston, S. C. He delivered lectures on chemistry in the town, and in November, 1786, was killed in a duel. He lived twenty-two years.

His poetry was quite bad. Of all the American writers of the time he was probably more under the Della Cruscan influence than anybody else. In the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century a group of lazy, sickly and moony English ladies and gentlemen resident in Florence took it into their empty heads that they would like to be poets. So they Christened themselves Della Cruscans, reviving a Sixteenth Century designation, and founded the *Florence Miscellany*, which they filled with dithyrambs to Love, Infinity, Futility, etc. For some unknown reason the mania spread to London where little Della Cruscans sprang up instantaneously, and the columns of the *World* and the *Oracle* began to teem with their nonsense. Things then moved rapidly, and before long there was a holocaust of new poets: Laura, Maria,

¹ "The Literary Remains of Joseph Brown Ladd, M.D. Collected by His Sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Haskins of Rhode Island. To Which is Prefixed, A Sketch of the Author's Life, by B. W. Chittenden." N. Y. 1832. pp. 91-92.

Carlos, Orlando, Adelaide, Amanda, Arouet, Menander, etc. "There was a specious brilliancy in these exotics," said the critic William Gifford, "which dazzled the native grubs, who had scarcely ever ventured beyond a sheep and a crook, and a rose-tree grove; with an ostentatious display of blue hills and crashing torrents and petrifying suns."¹

The plague, like the Gongorist mania a hundred years before, spread to America, but while Gifford killed it in short order in England it lived on in this country far into the Nineteenth Century. It is possible to argue that it is still going strong in the South today. Mrs. Rowson, Robert Treat Paine, Dr. Ladd, and nearly every other writer was infected, but Dr. Ladd more than anybody else. He was scarcely able to write a poem, on no matter what subject, without giving it a Della Cruscan turn somewhere, as witness the following "Ode For the Anniversary of American Independence, July 4, 1785."

*Sons of Columbia! all attend,
And give the genius of your land,
The tribute of a song;
For now, eight summers past away,
Again returns the glorious day,
When Freedom made us strong.*

*She warmed our hearts and armed our hands,
Breathed generous ardor through our bands,
And bade us dare be free;
By her inspired we rush to fight,
Resolved to conquer in her right,
And independent be.*

*But while with joy the board is crowned,
Oh, let some generous tears flow round,
For heroes great and good:
Who, martyrs in the glorious cause,
Their country, liberty, and laws,
Defended with their blood.*

¹ Quoted in "History of American Verse: 1610-1897," by James L. Onderdonk. Chicago. 1901. p. 106.

*Thus, long as time itself endure,
 Our INDEPENDENCE rests secure,
 Nor fears a tyrant's nod.
 When the last fire involves this ball,
 Then, not till then, the cause shall fall,
 Of liberty, and God.*

*Then, as the circular year comes round,
 With freedom's choicest blessings crowned,
 We'll hail the illustrious day;
 And every poet shall resume
 His annual task, in years to come,
 To raise the votive lay.¹*

Bad as this is, the love poems from "Arouet" to "Amanda" are even worse. One specimen is enough:

TO AMANDA

*Say, sole directress of thy Arouet's heart,
 Shall not one line his faithful love impart?
 Oh! think, though parted by the cruel main,
 How much for thee he suffers every pain:
 And know, dear maid, upon his soul imprest,
 Thy lovely image must forever rest.
 When thou art absent, with what long delay,
 The sun's slow chariot roll the hours away!
 But blest with thee, time all rapid plies
 His flippant wings, and on the minute flies.
 Full oft remembrance, by her magic power,
 Crowds with past scenes the visionary hour:
 When oh! 'twas thine, dear maid, to check the sigh
 Of rising grief, and wipe the tear-clad eye;
 With soft endearments, such as angels prove,
 We sighed — and looked — unutterable love!²*

One of his anonymous admirers called Ladd the equal of Homer!³

¹ "The Literary Remains of Joseph Brown Ladd . . ." pp. 50-53.

² *Ibid.* p. 107.

³ See *ibid.* p. 160.

There was one thing, however, which he did that deserves commendation. He was probably the first prominent man of letters in America to attack Dr. Samuel Johnson. His diatribe appeared in the *Columbian Herald* of Charleston, S. C. Beside being a fine piece of literary polemics, it is also a good piece of prose. It is the more remarkable coming from so young a man. Ladd was then only twenty-two years old. He exposes Johnson's "little soul, and the deficient genius, replete with . . . ignorance, ill nature and illiberality. . . . The swelled, bombastic style succeeds with the lower class of readers, who are by far the most numerous. Hence, every writer, who is deficient in real genius, will affect pomposity, and magnificence of language."¹ Obviously, Ladd had a good critical head on him, and had he lived longer it was possible that he would have had at the pygmy Johnsons nearer by, and thus done a real service to American letters.

7. JONATHAN MITCHELL SEWALL

Sewall was a lawyer at the Rockingham Bar in New Hampshire. With John Blair Linn of Philadelphia he was one of the two chief Ossianic bards of America in his day. As a young man he paraphrased Ossian at length, but fortunately forgot about him as he grew older. He also tried his hand at patriotic poems, love lyrics, and almost every other form of verse. "He spent more of his time upon whims and vagaries, to test his powers, than became a wise man, conscious that life is short and science long."² He was born in 1748 and died in 1808. He would deserve no further mention were it not for his classically preposterous attempt to paraphrase Washington's Farewell Address in verse. The reason he gave for his effort was that "verse commonly makes a deeper impression, and is more easily retained in the memory than prose (however inferior the former may be)."³

This versification is the only one of its kind ever attempted in the United States. The following is the section dealing with entangling alliances:

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 185-186.

² "Lectures on American Literature, With Some Remarks on Some Passages of American History," by Samuel L. Knapp. N. Y. 1829. p. 174.

³ "Versification of Washington's Excellent Farewell-Address To the Citizens of the United States," by a Gentleman of Portsmouth, N. H. Portsmouth, N. H. 1798. *The Magazine of History With Notes & Queries*. Extra Number 106. (Volume 27, no. 2.) Tarrytown, N. Y. 1925. p. 89.

*To render efficacious and secure
 Your union, and prosperity ensure,
 A government constructed of the whole,
 Of universal influence and controul,
 Is indispensable! no compacts sign'd
 Between the parts, however solemn, bind.
 Alliances, (vague, selfish, insincere)
 But miserable substitutes appear.
 They must inevitably suffer still
 Th' infractions, interruptions, ev'ry ill,
 Which all such brittle compacts, at all times,
 Have hitherto experienced in all climes.*

8. MERCY WARREN, HANNAH W. FOSTER,
 ROBERT ROGERS, ETHAN ALLEN, ROYALL TYLER

Mrs. Mercy Warren was the daughter of James Otis and the wife of James James, the Revolutionary leader. She lived a long and by no means useless life. She was born in Barnstable, Mass., in 1728, and died in 1814. She commanded the respect and confidence of John Adams, Washington, and Jefferson. In 1773 she published "The Adulateur," and two years later, "The Group," both political satires, which were much talked about at the time, but are now forgotten. In 1790 appeared her "Poems, Dramatic and Miscellaneous." In 1805 was published her *magnum opus*, "History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution. Interspersed with Biographical, Political and Moral Reflections. Three volumes." It was an ambitious work, but so partisan and so heavily written as to be quite worthless.

Mrs. Hannah W. Foster (1759-1840) was a sort of second-rate Mrs. Rowson. Her chief work was "The Coquette; or, The History of Eliza Wharton. A Novel: Founded on Fact, By a Lady of Massachusetts." It was first published in Salem in 1797. It was a novel in the form of letters, and was quite popular. It went through at least thirty editions.

Robert Rogers (1727-1800) was one of the most celebrated rogues of early New Hampshire history.¹ He was a soldier, a farmer, a

¹ The best brief account of his career is "The Life and Exploits of Robert Rogers, The Ranger. A Paper Read before the New England Historic-Genealogical Society, At Their Annual Meeting in Boston, November 5, 1884," by Joseph B. Walker of Concord, N. H. Boston. 1885.

champion adulterer, and an author. Two books are commonly credited to him: "Journals of Major Robert Rogers: Containing An Account of the Several Excursions He Made Under the Generals Who Commanded Upon the Continent of North America, During the Late War [the war with the French and Indians, 1755-1803]; From Which May Be Collected The Most Material Circumstances of Every Campaign upon that Continent, From the Commencement to the Conclusion of the War" (London, 1765); and "A Concise Account of North America; Containing a description of the several British Colonies on that Continent, including the islands of New Foundland, Cape Breton, &c., as to their Situation, Extent, Climate, Soil, Produce, Rise, Government, Religion, Present Boundaries, and the number of inhabitants supposed to be in each. Also of the Interior and Westerly Parts of the Country, upon the rivers St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, Christin and the Great Lakes, To which is subjoined, An account of the several Nations and Tribes of Indians residing in those Parts, as to their Customs, Manners, Government, Numbers, &c., Containing many useful and Entertaining Facts, never before treated of" (London, 1764).

Rogers was so big a liar that it is impossible to put any reliance upon anything he says in these books. Toward the end of his life he turned loyalist, but made a very poor showing in battle, in marked contrast to his heroic deeds in the wars against the French and Indians. He was banished by the New Hampshire Legislature in November, 1778. His writings were worthless, but he himself was and still is good literary material. He was one of the most picturesque scoundrels of the Revolutionary period, even more so than the celebrated Henry Tufts. His most sympathetic biographer has made the best comment on him: "When the historian gives place to the novelist and the poet, his desperate achievements portrayed by their pens will render as romantic the borders of Lake George, as have the daring deeds of Rob Roy McGregor, rehearsed by Walter Scott, made enchanting the shores of Lock Lomond."¹

The exploits of Ethan Allen,² leader of the Green Mountain Boys, were even more romantic. Why he has been passed over by all the literati of America is one of the mysteries of our history. His attack on Ticonderoga with a band of green farmers was one of the truly

¹ *Ibid.* p. 15.

² The most recent and best biography of him is "Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys," by John Pell. Boston. 1929.

glamorous exploits of the national history. He captured the first fortified position from the British, and thereby made the Revolution inevitable.¹ He was a boisterous, boastful and blustering man, but he was incorruptible. He wrote very little, but what he did write had a fine fire in it. His "Reason, the Only Oracle of Man," though it contained no new ideas, can still be read with profit. The same with his autobiographical "Narrative of Col. Ethan Allen's Captivity, From the time of his being taken by the British near Montreal, on the 25th day of September, in the year 1775, to the time of his exchange, on the 6th day of May, 1778. Containing His Voyages and Travels, With the most remarkable occurrences respecting himself, and many other Continental Prisoners, of different ranks and characters, which fell under his observation in the course of the same; particularly the destruction of the prisoners at New-York, by General Sir William Howe, in the years 1776 and 1777; interspersed with some Political Observations. Written by himself, and now published for the information of the curious in all Nations. Walpole, N. H. 1807."

Royall Tyler's (1757-1826) chief claim to remembrance was that he was the author of the first native American comedy, "The Contrast," in which he introduced for the first time the character of Brother Jonathan, the shrewd Yankee. He was a lawyer, a justice of the Vermont Supreme Court, and contributed prose and verse to the *Farmer's Museum*, published in Walpole, N. H. He wrote many other comedies and farces, but none of them has lived.²

¹ For a good discussion of the Ticonderoga affair see "Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga," by John Spargo. Rutland, Vt. 1926.

² A good brief account of his life is contained in the introduction by Helen Tyler Brown to "The Contrast: A Comedy in Five Acts, With a History of George Washington's Copy," by James Benjamin Wilbur. Boston. 1920. A complete bibliography of Tyler's writings appears here on pp. 118-120.

CHAPTER IX

Loyalist Ballads of New England

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Loyalist Ballads of New England

THE LOYALIST PROSE WRITINGS HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO IN the discussion of the leaders of the Revolution. Logically these friends of the Crown were much better grounded than their opponents. The Governor Hutchinsons and Benjamin Churches, from the point of view of constitutional law, had the stronger case, though history, which seldom pays attention to logic or constitutional law, was against them. Their pamphlets are of interest now only to the political historian. The great three-volume history of Massachusetts by Thomas Hutchinson will, of course, live. It is a source book of the first importance.

It was strange that New England, where the Revolution was born, produced so little loyalist poetry. If more was written, it has not been discovered. The mass of the loyalist ballads were written in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. Perhaps the loyalists of those parts felt safer than their colleagues in New England, where a loyalist's life was in such danger that no insurance company of today would have given him a policy for any premium whatever. Of the loyalist ballads and songs of New England extant very little can be said in praise. They were far inferior to the Revolutionary pieces. "The Times" and "The Choice" by Benjamin Church (1739-1776) created a little stir in their day, but they are unreadable today. The same is true of the anonymous songs and ballads. The following "Castle Island Song" appeared as a broadside in 1770, immediately after the Boston Massacre of March 5 of that year. It was "much in vogue among the friends to arbitrary power, and the soldiery at Castle Island, where it was composed, since the troops evacuated the town of Boston."¹

*You simple Bostonians, I'd have you beware,
Of your Liberty Tree, I would have you take care,
For if that we chance to return to the town,
Your houses and stores will come tumbling down.
Derry down, down, hey derry down.*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution," by Frank Moore. N. Y. 1866. p. 51.

*If you will not agree to Old England's laws,
I fear that King Hancock will soon get the yaws:
But he need not fear, for I swear we will,
For the want of a doctor give him a hard pill.*

*A brave reinforcement, we soon think to get;
Then we will make you poor pumpkins to sweat:
Our drums they'll rattle, and then you will run
To the devil himself, from the sight of a gun.*

*Our fleet and our army, they soon will arrive,
Then to a bleak island, you shall not us drive.
In every house you shall have three or four,
And if that will not please you, you shall have half a score.¹*

"Burrowing Yankees," which follows, and which appeared as a broadside in 1776, must have been very popular among the loyalists, for it went through four editions in a short time. It is a bit better than the "Castle Island Song."

*Ye Yankees who, mole-like, still throw up the earth,
And like them, to your follies are blind from your birth;
Attempt not to hold British troops at defiance,
True Britons, with whom you pretend an alliance.*

*Mistake not; such blood ne'er run in your veins,
'Tis no more than the dregs, the lees, or the drains:
Ye affect to talk big of your hourly attacks;
Come on! and I'll warrant, we'll soon see your backs.*

*Such threats of bravadoes serve only to warm
The true British hearts, you ne'er can alarm;
The Lion once rous'd, will strike such a terror,
Shall show you, poor fools, your presumption and error.*

*And the time will soon come when your whole rebel race
Will be drove from the lands, nor dare show your face:
Here's a health to great George, may he fully determine,
To root from the earth all such insolent vermin.²*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 51-52.

² *Ibid.* pp. 128-129.

CHAPTER X

Virginia

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Virginia

I. INTRODUCTORY NOTES

UP TO THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION VIRGINIA WAS PROBABLY the poorest and shabbiest of all the Colonies. The New Englanders, despite their idiotic theology and incessant bickerings regarding church government and the significance of thunderstorms, built schools, published newspapers and pamphlets, and did a good business in manufacturing, fishing, and ship-building. The Virginians all the while stagnated. They wallowed in their bogus aristocracy, and probably would have continued to do so to this day had not a horde of so-called barbaric Germans and Scotch-Irish descended upon them from Pennsylvania, and taught them the virtues of industry, thrift, independence, and even decency. It was these "foreigners" who civilized the Colony, and it was from their midst that some of its most celebrated leaders came.

As late as 1765 there was nothing like a real town in the entire Colony. Norfolk, the largest of them all, had only 7,000 people, and Jamestown consisted of half a dozen houses. Williamsburg, the old capital and university town, had 200 wooden houses, and its streets were unpaved. The chief industry of the Colony was tobacco-raising, and communities seldom housed more than ten families. Nearly all the transportation was done by water. There was no manufacturing of any kind, and even the rude carpentry was done by slaves or white mechanics who traveled from plantation to plantation in search of work. "Every manufactured article that required the least skill or nicety of workmanship was imported from England, in ships of which the owners, masters, and crew were generally either Englishmen or New-Englanders."¹

Tobacco-raising, much more so then than now, was a hazardous business. The returns were generally immense, but they fluctuated

¹ "Virginia in the Colonial Period," by John Fiske. *Harper's Magazine*. November, 1882. p. 903.

from year to year, "and this fluctuation affected the value of every article that was bought and sold throughout the Colony. . . . The inevitable result of this was wild extravagance in living, chronic debt, relieved by frequent bankruptcy, persistent evasion of creditors, and the destruction of that trait of character which among a commercial people is known as financial integrity, and prized as one of the cardinal virtues."¹ The slave-owners had nothing to do, so they were hospitable to one another, and when they had money they bought fine horses, good wines, and fancy dresses for their wives. But they did not buy books. Some of the private libraries in Virginia—such as Beverly's, Byrd's, and Marshall's—were the best in the land, but the Colony as a whole was singularly lacking in an interest in books. The intellectual life of the Old Dominion, therefore, up to the time of Henry, Jefferson, Marshall, Lee, and Mason, was very low.

The local clergy, unlike those in New England, did nothing to help matters. The typical parson of old Virginia was a fox-hunting, wine-bibbing fellow, who harbored no solicitude for the welfare of his flock. He was often, indeed, such a nuisance that in 1776 the Virginia Assembly, found it necessary to pass a law providing for the punishment of every minister who should become "notoriously scandalous by drunkenness, swearing, fornication, or other haynous and crying sins."² All the other professions were on the same level. Medicine was about the lowest; its practice was mainly left to itinerant barbers and quacks.

Politically, the majority of the people were probably monarchists. They were devoted to the King and the Church of England. When the Stamp Act and the Townshend Act were promulgated the Virginians were heavily in debt to English ship-owners, and one would have thought that they would have grabbed at the idea of revolution, or of separation at least, but such was not the case. The sole reply to the Stamp Act, before the Scotchman Patrick Henry taught them differently, was a polite remonstrance that the King should have asked their consent. At bottom they remained loyal. "They deposed the King's Governor, and made war on the King himself, but they had no desire whatever to abolish the royal authority in Virginia. And they were Churchmen as they were King's-men. They denounced the

¹ "Virginia in the Colonial Period," by John Fiske. *Harper's Magazine*. November, 1882. p. 903.

² Quoted in "The Settlement of the Interior of Virginia From 1730 to 1776, and its Effect on the Early History of the State," by Mary Patton. The Department of History, the University of Chicago, 1913. p. 41.

clergy, but they clung to Episcopacy.”¹ And they would have continued in this loyalty had it not been for the great migration of Germans and Scotch-Irish to Virginia between 1730 and 1775.

The first two big inflowings of Germans to this country took place immediately after Louis XIV had laid waste the vineyards of the Upper Rhine in the War of the Palatinate (1682-1698), and after the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714). Most of the first immigrants went to Pennsylvania because of its rich soil and because of the fairly high degree of religious toleration within its borders. The Scotch and Irish came over because of political, economic, and religious oppression at home. There was also the famine of 1740. New England got more of the Scotch-Irish than of the Germans, but Pennsylvania again got most of them. About 1730 news reached the Pennsylvania-Germans and Scotch-Irish that land was more plentiful and much cheaper in Virginia. So they emigrated there, and by 1770 quadrupled the Colony's population. Both the Germans and the Scotch-Irish were farming peoples, hardy, frugal, and industrious. They settled in the uplands, and led “a free independent life.”² “Living in the early days so far from the older civilization of the coast, cut off by lack of roads from communication with tide-water, compelled to depend upon themselves for the necessities of life, earning their own bread by the sweat of the brow, living on a footing of equality with their neighbors, breathing an atmosphere untainted with social or political preference, [they] developed an individualism, a spirit of independence and democracy unknown in the older community of the lowlands.”³

Thus just before the Revolution there were two distinct societies in Virginia: (1) the old English settlements along the coast, with their tobacco-raising, their slaves, and their heavy dependence upon commerce with England for all the necessities of life; and (2) the German and Scotch-Irish highlanders, a self-sufficient, self-supporting community of small farmers, in whose labor system the slave occupied almost no place. The immigrants were jealous of their independence and of their rights. “This new society of the West not only acted as a fighting frontier for the old plantations of the coast in the French and Indian wars, but, in turn, it gradually wrested from them such political and religious concessions as to revolutionize Virginian insti-

¹ “Virginia. A History of the People,” by John Esten Cooke. Boston. 1903. p. 377.

² Patton. p. 29.

³ *Ibid.* p. 33.

tutions.”¹ Soon they produced Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson, and they left their mark forever not only on the history of the Colony, but also on that of the nation. They democratized the erstwhile aristocratic institutions of the Colony, and it was their spirit of independence, voiced first by Patrick Henry, that really turned it against Great Britain.

2. PATRICK HENRY

Next to James Otis, Henry was unquestionably the greatest orator of the Revolution. He did not have Otis's fine, careless impetuosity, but he was probably more persuasive to the conservative moneyed classes. When he first came on the scene the Randolphs and Lees of Virginia did not dream of fighting the Army and Navy of Great Britain, but after four, five years of listening to his arguments they were nearly as rabid revolutionaries as the New England mob leaders. In his youth Jefferson used to say of him that “he spoke the way Homer wrote.” But in Jefferson's old age, when he got into the habit of giving more way to his imagination than his concern for accuracy, he manufactured the libel that Henry never read a book in his life, that he knew nothing, and that “his manners had something of coarseness in them. His passion was music, dancing and pleasantry. He excelled in the last. . . .”² George Mason, who knew Henry very well and loved him perhaps a little more than the cold facts warranted, probably came closer to the truth about him when he said:

He is by far the most powerful speaker I ever heard. Every word he says not only engages, but commands the attention, and your passions are no longer your own when he addresses them. But his eloquence is the least part of his merit. He is, in my opinion, the first man upon this continent as well in abilities as public virtues, and had he lived in Rome about the time of the first Punic War, when the Roman people had arrived at their meridian glory, and their virtue not tarnished, Mr. Henry's talents might have put him at the head of that glorious commonwealth.³

¹ Patton. p. 34.

² Quoted in “Patrick Henry,” by Moses Coit Tyler. Boston. 1887. p. 8. This is by far the best biography of Henry in print, though it is surely not a masterpiece. Tyler seems to be eager to make a saint of Henry, which he surely was not. But as to his facts, Tyler, as always, is quite reliable.

³ Quoted in “Virginia. A History of the People,” by John Esten Cooke. Boston. 1903. p. 574.

Henry's main ideas with regard to the Revolution were like Otis's. Both denied the supremacy of the British Parliament upon Sir Edward Coke's position that the Common Law controlled the acts of Parliament, which is to say, that when a law was against common right and reason, it might be adjudged null and void.¹ The new England preachers were expounding this doctrine for a hundred years before either Otis or Henry was born. It was an old idea, but the two orators put fire into it. They used different measures in their wild and glorious exhortations of Great Britain. If Henry was the Homer of the Revolution, then Otis, as some one has suggested, was its Virgil.

Henry has also been called "the forest-born Demosthenes," "the trumpeter of the Revolution," and "the orator of nature." His life story reads almost like an Alger novel. He was born in Hanover county, Va., on May 29, 1736. His father was born in Scotland, and was a cousin of the historian Robertson. His mother was of Welsh descent. He was pretty stupid as a student in grammar school, so he was put to work as a clerk in a country store. Then he went into business with his father, and within a year they failed. He was nineteen at the time, and in abject poverty, but that did not stop him from marrying a Miss Shelton, the daughter of a poor farmer. The two fathers-in-law bought the young couple a farm, and then a store, but Henry couldn't make either pay. If no customers came to his store in the morning, which was usual, he used to close it up in the afternoon and go fishing.

Then, for some unknown reason, he decided to become a lawyer. So he read Coke upon Littleton and the laws of Virginia for four or five weeks, and after a terrible struggle with one of the bar examiners, Peyton Randolph, he was admitted to practice in 1760. But very little business came his way until 1763, when his father, who was then a judge, made him counsel for the people in the celebrated Parson's Case. The Virginia ministers used to be paid a specified amount of tobacco each year by the Colony, but in 1763 the crop was so low that the Legislature decided to pay them a flat amount of money equivalent to what the aforementioned quantity of tobacco would bring in the current market. The real value of the money was considerably less than the real value of the tobacco in good times. The parsons appealed to the King, who overruled the Legislature. But the latter refused to give in. Though ordered by the King to reimburse the parsons, the

¹ There is a good discussion on this point in "A History of the United States," by Edward Channing. Vol. III, "The American Revolution, 1761-1789," N. Y. 1924. p. 24 ff.

legislators claimed the right to determine the amount of the reimbursement. It was unquestionably an illegal procedure, but a test case was brought to court, and Henry pleaded for the people. At the beginning it looked like a lost case, but Henry's concluding argument was so impassioned that the jury deliberated a few minutes and awarded the parsons only one cent.

He immediately became very popular with the people, and his law business flourished. In 1765 he was made a member of the House of Burgesses from Louisa county. It was in the Spring of that year that he presented his celebrated Virginia Resolves, which told the King, in effect, that if he signed any more laws which the people of Virginia did not like they would pay no attention to them. The debate in the House, according to Jefferson, was "most bloody."¹ It was at the climax of the argument that Henry addressed the King in these words, now so familiar to every school boy:

Caesar had his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell; and George the Third ["Treason," shouted the speaker. "Treason," "treason," rose from all sides of the room. The orator paused in stately defiance till these rude exclamations were ended, and then, rearing himself with a look of still prouder and fiercer determination, he so closed the sentence as to baffle his accusers, without in the least flinching from his own position,] —and George the Third may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it.²

The Resolves were passed.

Henry then began in earnest his fight for the rights of the Dissenters, of whom he was one, which finally culminated in the Religious Freedom Act of 1785, by which the Church of England was disestablished in Virginia. Jefferson actually wrote the act, but it was mainly Henry who made it possible for him to do it so soon. In May, 1774, Henry took a leading part in the resolutions presented before the House of Burgesses against the Boston Port Bill. He was a member of the first Revolutionary Convention of Virginia, held in August, 1774, and he was chosen by it a delegate to the First Continental Congress, where he served on a number of important committees. In the Provincial Convention of March, 1775, he introduced a group of

¹ Quoted in Tyler's biography. p. 63.

² Quoted *ibid.* p. 64.

resolutions calling for the organization of the colonial militia. They drew forth tremendous opposition from the delegates from the tide-water region. Henry replied to them with an oration that shook them to their roots, and that has become a classic in the political history of the United States. Like Otis's famous speech against the Writs of Assistance, it has come down to us only second hand, through Henry's first biographer, William Wirt, who listened to it in the gallery, and made notes of it. How much of the speech as now known is Henry's, and how much is Wirt's will probably never be determined. Anyway, it is a magnificent piece of oratory, one of the few really great ones that this country has produced. It follows in full:

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth—and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those, who having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the house? Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourself to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourself how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those war like preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled, that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation—the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy in this quarter of the

world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find, which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done everything that could be done, to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned—we have remonstrated—we have supplicated—we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned with contempt, from the foot of the throne. In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained—we must fight!—I repeat it, sir, we must fight; An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts, is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak—unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemy shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those forces which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can

send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged. Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come!! I repeat it sir, let it come!!!

It is vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, peace, peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!¹

There was no opposing voice, the resolutions were adopted, and a committee was appointed, with Henry as chairman, to prepare a plan for the defense of the Colony. During the war he took an active part in many of the campaigns, though the colonial command was given to Colonel William Woodford. In 1776 Henry was elected first Governor of the State of Virginia, and he was reelected until 1779, when he became ineligible. During his term of office he had virtually dictatorial powers. In 1780 he was elected to the Legislature, serving till 1784, when he was again elected Governor, which post he held for the next two years. In 1788 he was a member of the convention which ratified the Federal Constitution. Henry at first vigorously opposed the Constitution because it did not sufficiently protect the rights of the States and of individuals, it centered too much power in the Federal government. Madison fought back, and nominally won, but it was in large part through Henry's efforts that the first Ten Amendments were attached to the Constitution immediately after ratification.

It was primarily because of his long struggle with Madison and Washington with regard to the ratification of the Constitution that his

¹ "The Life of Patrick Henry," by William Wirt. Hartford. 1846. Tenth edition. pp. 138-146.

relations with the ruling party became estranged. But Washington held him in such high esteem that he repeatedly offered him the highest posts in his government. Henry declined them all, including those of Secretary of State and of Chief Justice of the United States. He also declined a seat in the Senate in 1794, Adams's offer of the chairmanship of a special mission to France, and also an election as Governor of Virginia in 1796. He died on June 6, 1799.

Henry was very careless of his reputation. He kept very few of his papers, and no record at all of his speeches or other documents. Of his speeches that have come down to us, none of them is of great moment, except the celebrated "liberty or death" piece, and that has been handed down second-hand. In its class it is a masterpiece, one of the few such masterpieces in our history. It will live as long as the story of the American Revolution lives, and as long as the memory of Henry's noble part in it lives. American oratory, on the whole, has been of a low order, but the contributions of such men as Otis and Henry to it were far above the average level, and thus deserve to be cherished, the more so when such resounding platitudinarians as Daniel Webster and Henry Clay threaten to dim their memory.

3. THOMAS JEFFERSON

Dead now one hundred and five years, Jefferson is still the object of serious controversy and sharp difference of opinion. He has been called everything from a trimmer and a liar to "an almost perfect citizen" and the second "best chief magistrate of a republic the world has ever known."¹ But no one has ever denied his tremendous influence both in this country and abroad. "His influence on the development of liberalism and democratic ideas throughout the world can hardly be estimated."² He was not an original thinker. He was a mediocre executive. He was not a great writer, and as a man left a good deal to be desired. Washington, Hamilton, Madison, and Franklin surpassed him in one or another of these respects. But it was his good fortune to catch the spirit of the times, and to set it down in brilliant language in one of the most important documents in American history.

¹ "Life of Thomas Jefferson. Third President of the United States," by James Parton. Ninth edition. Boston. 1887. p. 746. There is no wholly satisfactory biography of Jefferson in print, but this one by Parton is probably the best of the lot. It suffers chiefly from a preposterous hero-worship, but otherwise it is fairly authoritative.

² "Thomas Jefferson: The Apostle of Americanism," by Gilbert Chinard. Boston. 1929. p. xv.

He was born on April 13, 1743, at Shawell, Abbermarle county, Va. His forbears came from Wales. His father, Peter Jefferson (1707-1757), was of the early Virginian yeoman stock. Peter was a civil engineer, a surveyor, a justice of the peace, and a burgess. He married into the Randolph family, but unlike them was a Whig in politics. Thomas was graduated from the College of William and Mary at the age of twenty, after completing a course of study including Latin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, the higher mathematics, philosophy, and the natural sciences. He was a violinist, singer, dancer, and horseman, and was a close friend of Dr. William Small and George Whyte, the leaders of an advanced intellectual club of Richmond. He studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1767. He was fairly successful, but he did not shine. He had a weak voice, and thus was a feeble orator. He seldom spoke in all his public life, not even in the sessions of the Continental Congress.

In 1772 he married Mrs. Martha Wayles Skelton, a childless widow of twenty-three. He had six children by her, but only two of them survived infancy. In 1769 he was elected a member of the House of Burgesses, and he remained there till 1775 when he entered the Continental Congress. The year before he had written "A Summary View of the Rights of America." It won him instant acclaim, and made him a leader of the revolutionary party. In the Spring of 1776 he drafted the Declaration of Independence, which "ran through the Colonies like wildfire, in many printed forms."¹ It was really a succinct statement of "A Summary View." The Congress made several alterations in Jefferson's draft.

After the acceptance of the Declaration he returned to Virginia. He did a great deal for the Colony in the next few years. He introduced three important bills in the House of Burgesses: one for religious freedom (which was finally passed in 1785), another for the creation of public schools, and a third for the establishment of free public libraries. Next to Patrick Henry he did more than anybody else to free the Colony from the aristocratic influence of the tidewater, and to start it toward democratic statehood.

In 1779 he succeeded Henry as Governor. He was a poor executive. He wrote official letters and proclamations, and that was about all.

¹ "The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1790. Together with a Summary of the Chief Events in Jefferson's Life." An Introduction and Notes by Paul Leicester Ford and a Foreword by George Haven Putnam. N. Y. 1926. p. xxx. The Ford introduction here is practically the same as his introduction to his edition of Jefferson's Writings in ten volumes. N. Y. 1892-1899.

"His administration produced open murmurs, and at the end of two years he sought relief in resignation, with the stigma of incompetence, if not of cowardice, the prevailing opinion concerning him. . . ."¹ As a result of this failure he thought, for a time, of spending the rest of his life in seclusion. It was in that period that he prepared "Notes on Virginia," for the information of the French government. It was intended for confidential use only, and so it is very outspoken and is still a valuable document for that reason. In the same period he wrote "The Art of Poesy," a work of negligible importance. He was then prevailed upon to reënter public life. He was sent to France in 1784, to help negotiate treaties with various European countries, and while engaged in this work was appointed minister to France (1785-1789). He was very popular over there, and was very friendly to the prevailing doctrines in the land.² When he returned to this country he was accused of bringing back the infidel doctrines of the French philosophers, and to some he appeared as the embodiment of Jacobinism.³

Washington made him his Secretary of State, but in 1793 he resigned and returned to Monticello, partly because of his battles with Hamilton and Washington's siding with the latter, and partly because of his depleted personal fortune. In 1796 he was elected Vice-President. The post gave him time in which to do some writing. He composed an essay on Anglo-Saxon, a memoir of the discovery of animal bones in the western part of Virginia, and a description of a mould-board of the least resistance for ploughs. In 1801 he was elected third President of the United States, and four years later he was reëlected. He retired from public life in 1809, and spent the rest of his days in his native State. He established the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. He planned the buildings, gathered the faculty—mainly from abroad—, and shaped the general organization. He wrote a "Plan of an Agricultural Society" (of small importance); prepared biographical notes and sketches of Franklin, Randolph, and Meriwether Lewis; outlined a work to be entitled, "The Morals and Life of Jesus of Nazareth"; and in 1821 began his autobiography, which he carried down only to July 29, 1790.

He wrote at least 25,000 letters. Toward the end of his life he was very poor, and was forced to sell his fine library of more than 10,000

¹ Ford Introduction. p. xxiv.

² For the extent of the French influence on Jefferson see "The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America," by Bernard Faÿ. Translated by Ramon Guthrie. N. Y. 1927. pp. 222, 268, 465, 475.

³ See Chinard, p. xii ff.

volumes to the Library of Congress for a nominal sum. Just before his death, on July 4, 1826, his friends made a national collection in order to enable him to die in peace. They managed to gather only \$16,500. He died on the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, on the same day with John Adams, his life-long enemy, and he chose for his tomb the epitaph, "Here was buried Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for Religious Freedom, and father of the University of Virginia."

The Declaration is commonly regarded as Jefferson's greatest single work. Surely it was his most popular one. It "was read amid thundering huzzas in every market place and amid fervent prayers in nearly every pulpit in the Colonies."¹ He came to the Continental Congress in 1775 with a high literary reputation. John Adams said of him at the time that he brought with him "a reputation for literature, science, and a happy talent for composition. Writings of his were handed about, remarkable for the peculiar felicity of expression."² The draft which he submitted to the Congress was greatly modified by it, and in all cases for the better. As Professor Becker says, "On the whole it must be said that Congress left the Declaration better than it found it. The few verbal changes that were made improved the phraseology, I am inclined to think, in every case."³ But it was really not so much by the few verbal changes that the best improvements were made, but rather by the long and highly judicious cuts.⁴ Jefferson, all his life, was given to exuberant and frequently grossly exaggerated judgments. He was not overly careful about historical accuracy, and often preferred a bombastic phrase to the bare truth. It was not for nothing that he read and loved Ossian.⁵ Here, for example, is what he said about George III in the Declaration, which the Congress, with good judgment and excellent taste, cut out. The passage almost reads like a denunciation of Kaiser Wilhelm II by the late Rev. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis:

Future ages will scarcely believe that the hardness of one man adventured, within the short compass of twelve years only, to lay

¹ Chinard. p. 61.

² Quoted in "The Declaration of Independence. A Study in the History of Political Ideas," by Carl Becker. N. Y. 1922. p. 194.

³ *Ibid.* p. 209.

⁴ All the changes and cuts are given in the Autobiography, pp. 35-42.

⁵ Parton. p. 105 *ff.*

a foundation so broad & so undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered and fixed in principles of freedom.¹

The following is what John Adams called "the vehement philippic against Negro slavery."² Happily the Congress cut it out completely. It was false in point of fact, and, from the point of view of style, rather clumsily written. It was sheer jingoism and cheap politics at best.

He has incited treasonable insurrections of our fellow-citizens with the allurements of forfeiture and confiscation of property.

He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation hither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce. And that this assembly of horrors might want no fact of distinguished die, he is now exciting those very people to rise in arms against us, and to purchase liberty of which he has deprived them, by murdering the people on whom he has obtruded them; thus paying off former crimes committed against the liberties of one people with crimes which he urges them to commit against the lives of another.³

In its final form, and particularly in its preamble and exordium, the Declaration is truly a magnificent performance. A mighty lift and a restrained fervor combine to make it a gorgeous piece of political poetry.

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands, which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of

¹ The Autobiography. p. 40.

² Quoted by Becker. p. 212.

³ The Autobiography. pp. 39-40.

mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Thus the preamble. Now the exordium:

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the States of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.¹

As for the ideational content of the Declaration, no one now claims that there was anything original in it.² Rufus Choate said of it that it was made up of "glittering and resounding generalities of natural right."³ Richard Henry Lee, Jefferson's old friend, sneered at it as a

¹ The final draft of the Declaration, as it reads in the parchment copy, is given in Becker, pp. 185-193.

² The best discussion of this point is still "The Declaration of Independence in the Light of Modern Criticism," by Moses Coit Tyler. *The North American Review*. No. CCCCLXXVI. July, 1896. pp. 1-16.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 1-2.

thing "copied from Locke's 'Treatise on Government.'" ¹ And the historian John Stockton Littell described it as "that enduring monument at once of patriotism, and of genius and skill in the art of appropriation." ² But such strictures are really beside the point. Jefferson himself answered them all adequately enough when he said that they might "all be true: of that I am not to be the judge. . . . Whether I had gathered my ideas from reading or reflection, I do not know. I know only that I turned to neither book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether and to offer no sentiment which had ever been expressed before." ³ Almost equally beside the point is the well-founded charge that the indictments listed in the Declaration are mainly unjust. ⁴ The Colonies were at war and in desperate straits, and the Continental Congress rightly did not consider it its purpose to write impartial history, but to encourage the people.

The Declaration was not a careful doctoral thesis, submitted to a university history department. It was at once an attempt at a moral and legal justification of the rebellion and a battle-cry, especially a battle-cry. It was a war poem, and in the main an excellent one. "With an extraordinary 'felicity of expression,' with a unique sense of fitness, Jefferson had struck every chord susceptible of response in every American heart. He had drawn for the people an ideal picture of the nation and themselves, he had portrayed them, as they yearned to be looked upon by posterity and the nations of the world." ⁵

The Declaration is not perfect as literature. It is not free of verbiage, charlatantry, and cheapness. It convinced the Americans, because they wanted to be convinced, but it probably was not wholly persuasive to the outside world. Even as passionate, partisan poetry, it falls somewhat short of the ideal. It lags in places, and in others its specious reasoning is too obtrusive even for a battle-cry. Carl Becker has characterized it well in saying of it that it

makes a strong bid for the reader's interest. But it was beyond the power of Jefferson to impregnate the Declaration with quali-

¹ "The Declaration of Independence in the Light of Modern Criticism," by Moses Coit Tyler. p. 6.

² *Ibid.* p. 6.

³ *Ibid.* p. 9.

⁴ On this see Becker, pp. 6-7, and the Ford Introduction, p. xxii ff.

⁵ Chinard. pp. 61-62.

ties that would give to the reader's assent the moving force of profound conviction. With all its precision, its concise rapidity, its clarity, its subtle implications and engaging felicities, one misses a certain unsophisticated directness, a certain sense of impregnable solidity and massive strength, a certain effect of passion restrained and deep convictions held in reserve, which would have given to it that accent of perfect sincerity and that emotional content which belong to the grand manner. The Declaration has not the grand manner—that passion under control which lifts prose to the level of true poetry.¹

Jefferson's chief political ideas were simple and common enough. They were an amalgam of French romanticism and English rationalism, and were the stock in trade of the New England ministers and "mechanics" for a hundred years before the Revolution. He believed in the Forgotten Man, and was in favor of giving him the fullest possible chance to order his own life. He looked with disfavor upon all government, and always tried to keep it down to the minimum and close to the governed. Hence his opposition to the Constitution in its first form and his insistence on a Bill of Rights. Hence his life-long advocacy of States' rights. Hence his agitation for absolute religious freedom. His basic theory of government he expressed thus in 1816 in a letter to F. W. Gilmore:

Our legislators are not sufficiently apprised of the rightful limits of their power; that their true office is to declare and enforce only our natural rights and duties, and to take none of them from us. No man has a natural right to commit aggression on the equal rights of another; and this is all from which the laws ought to restrain him; every man is under the natural duty of contributing to the necessities of the society; and this is all the laws should enforce on him; and, no man having a natural right to be the judge between himself and another, it is his natural duty to submit to the umpirage of an impartial third. When the laws have declared and enforced all this, they have fulfilled their functions; and the idea is quite unfounded, that on entering into society we give up any natural right.²

¹ Becker. pp. 221-222.

² The Congressional Edition of Jefferson's Works. Vol. VII. p. 3.

It is easy to understand why he favored the change of constitutions every nineteen, twenty years. A static body of laws was to him the worst possible curse to a country. In 1815 he wrote to W. H. Torrance thus :

Some men look at Constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the ark of the covenant, too sacred to be touched. They ascribe to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human, and suppose what they did beyond amendment. I knew that age well; I belonged to it, and labored with it. It deserved well of its country. It was very like the present; and forty years of experience in government is worth a century of book-reading; and this they would say themselves, were they to rise from the dead. I am certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. I think moderate imperfections had better be borne with; because, when once known, we accommodate ourselves to them, and find practical means of correcting their ill effects. But I know, also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy, as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors. It is this preposterous idea which has lately deluged Europe with blood. Their monarchs, instead of wisely yielding to the gradual change of circumstances, of favoring progressive accommodation to progressive improvement, have clung to old abuses, entrenched themselves behind steady habits, and obliged their subjects to seek through blood and violence rash and ruinous innovations, which, had they been referred to the peaceful deliberations and collected wisdom of the nation, would have been put into acceptable and salutary form. Let us follow no such examples, nor weakly believe that one generation is not as capable as another of taking care of itself, and of ordering its own affairs. Let us, as our sister States have done, avail ourselves of our reason, and experience, to correct the crude essays of our first and unexperienced, although wise, virtuous, and well-meaning councils. And lastly, let us provide in our Constitu-

tion for its revision at stated periods. What these periods should be nature herself indicates. By the European tables of mortality, of the adults living at one moment of time, a majority will be dead in about nineteen years. At the end of that period then a new majority is come into place; or, in other words, a new generation. Each generation is as independent of the one preceding, as that was of all which had gone before. It has, then, like them, a right to choose for itself the form of government it believes most promotive of its own happiness; consequently, to accommodate to the circumstances in which it finds itself, that received from its predecessors; and it is for the peace and good of mankind, that a solemn opportunity of doing this every nineteen or twenty years, should be provided by the Constitution; so that it may be handed on with periodic repairs, from generation, to generation, to generation, to the end of time, if anything human can endure so long.¹

His reasons for his advocacy of States' rights he expressed as follows in 1800 in a letter to Gideon Granger. It shows very well Jefferson's intimate knowledge of politicians and their ways.

Our country is too large to have all its affairs directed by a single government. Public service at such a distance, and from under the eye of their constituents, must, from the circumstance of distance, be unable to administer and overlook all the details necessary for the good government of the citizens, and the same circumstance, by rendering detection impossible to their constituents, will invite the public agents to corruption, plunder and waste. And I do verily believe that if the principle were to prevail of a common law being in force in the United States (which principle possesses the general government at once of all the powers of the State governments) it would become the most corrupt government on the earth. . . . What an augmentation of the field, for jobbing, speculating, plundering, office-building and office-hunting would be produced by an assumption of all the State powers into the hand of the general governments! The true theory of our Constitution is surely the wisest and best, that the States are independent as to everything within themselves and

¹ The Congressional Edition of Jefferson's Works. Vol. VII. pp. 14-15.

united as to everything respecting foreign nations. Let the general government be reduced to foreign concerns only, and let our affairs be disentangled from those of all other nations, except as to commerce, which the merchants will manage, the better the more they are left free to manage for themselves, and the general government may be reduced to a very simple organization and a very inexpensive one.¹

As for his religious views, Jefferson was not really an atheist, as is commonly supposed. He was what might be called an optimistic Unitarian. In a letter to John Adams, written on April 16, 1816, he said:

Yea.—I think with you, that it is a good world on the whole; that it has been framed on a principle of benevolence, and more pleasure than pain dealt to us. . . . My temperament is sanguine. I steer my bark with Hope in the head, leaving Fear astern. My hopes, indeed, sometimes fail, but not oftener than the foreboding of the gloomy.²

But he hated priests and their quibblings in as vigorous a manner as any atheist. In another letter to John Adams, written three years before the aforementioned one, he said:

I very much suspected that if thinking men would have the courage to think for themselves, and to speak what they think, it would be found that they do not differ in religious opinions as much as is supposed. I remember to have heard Dr. Priestly say, that if all England would candidly examine themselves and confess they would find that Unitarianism was really the religion of all; and I observe a bill is now pending in Parliament for the relief of Anti-Trinitarians. It is too late in the day for men of sincerity to pretend they believe in the Platonic mysticisms that three are one, and one is three; and yet that the one is not three, and the three are not one, to divide mankind by a single letter into Homoiousians and Homoöusians. But this constitutes the craft, the power and the profit of the priests. Sweep away their gossamer fabrics of factitious religion, and they would catch no more flies. We should all then, like the Quakers, live without an

¹ Ford's edition of the Writings of Jefferson. Vol. VII. p. 451.

² Quoted by Chinard. p. 528.

order of priests, moralize for ourselves, follow the oracle of conscience, and say nothing about what no man can understand, nor therefore believe; for I suppose belief to be the assent of the mind to an intelligible proposition.¹

Jefferson suffers as a writer because he wrote no masterpiece in the shape of a book. His "Notes on Virginia" is valuable chiefly to historians. "The Art of Poesy" is a sophomoric performance. The Autobiography is extremely sketchy and matter-of-fact, and makes rather dull reading. His scientific papers, from a literary standpoint, are surely not impressive. There remains only the Declaration of Independence, not a perfect composition, but unquestionably the greatest prose poem, or any other poem, of the Revolutionary period. But Jefferson's chief claim to our memory is really not to be found in his writings. He was not a great writer. His chief claim lies in his lifelong insistence on the "inalienable rights" of man to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. By harping upon them and their corollaries constantly, he made it forever impossible for invested authority to make a hash of the Bill of Rights without arousing bitter protest, and he made it forever impossible for the Federal government to usurp too much power to itself without bringing the nation to resistance.

He fought valiantly for the ever-enduring privilege of personal freedom—in religion, politics, thought. For this he will be remembered as long as the nation lives. He was not "the greatest political philosopher of America."² He was really no political philosopher at all—in the sense in which Hobbes, Pufendorf, and Locke were philosophers. He did not have their vast knowledge, and he was lacking in the necessary sharpness of mind. But he grasped readily their best ideas, and he trumpeted them over the land to his dying day. In the field of political theory he was no more than a journalist—but what a grand and glorious one! He brought a new dignity to the life of the common people of America, and thus added a spaciousness and a massive grandeur to the national history.

¹ Congressional Edition of Jefferson's Works. Vol. VI. p. 191.

² Chinard. p. xvi.

4. JAMES MADISON

The fourth President of the United States, said John Fiske the historian, was "a political philosopher worthy to be ranked with Montesquieu and Locke."¹ This is a high compliment indeed, but it is probably wholly justified. He had a sharper mind than Jefferson, and his instincts, in legislative matters, were sounder than Hamilton's. The Federal Constitution was basically his document, and very likely he had more to do with the writing of the *Federalist* than either Hamilton or Jay. For the part he played in the composition of these two works he will be remembered as long as the Republic lives.

James Madison was born at midnight, March 16, 1751, at Port Conway, on the Rappahannock river, in King George county, Va. His parents came from two of the oldest families in the Colony. His father, after whom he was named, was the largest landowner in Orange county. James was the oldest of twelve children. At seventeen he entered the sophomore class of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), and was graduated in 1771 with honors. He took an active part in the Revolutionary debates, but poor health prevented him from joining the army. In 1776 he was elected a delegate to the Virginia Convention, and was one of the committee of thirty-two which presented to it the Declaration of Rights which George Mason drew up. Madison tried to amend the last clause of the Declaration so as to make freedom of religious belief and worship not merely a matter of tolerance, but one of inalienable right. He lost, but he won a far greater victory in 1785, when he forced upon the State the first religious liberty bill in America.

Early in that year an attempt was made to lay a tax upon all the people "for the support of teachers of the Christian religion." Madison became alarmed. He wrote a "Memorial and Remonstrance," and sent copies of it all over the State. In the election of 1785 the whole matter was put before the people for referendum. In the ensuing session of the Legislature the dangerous bill was defeated, and in its place it was enacted "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions

¹ "Essays: Historical and Literary," by John Fiske, 2 vols. N. Y. 1907. Vol. I. Ch. V, "James Madison, the Constructive Statesman," pp. 185-218. This quotation, p. 187.

or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities.”¹ This was a pioneer measure. All the other States at the time imposed some religious test upon their civil office-holders, ranging from a declaration of belief in the infallibility of the Bible to the acceptance of the doctrines of the Trinity and the immortality of the soul. Madison’s “Religious Freedom Act” was translated into French and Italian, and was widely read and commented upon in Europe.²

He was a member of the Continental Congress and was largely instrumental in arranging with Spain, and later with France, for the free navigation of the Mississippi river from its source to the sea. Then came the great battle of his life. Even after the peace was assured it looked as if the Thirteen Colonies would collapse. The feeble Articles of Confederation were not ratified by all of them until 1781. By that time the States had proved to themselves that they were perfectly able to take care of themselves. The Continental Congress thus gradually became quite powerless. For a time it was no more than a sort of club. Such men as Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton saw clearly enough that things could not go on thus. So they called a Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787. Madison probably spoke more often at the convention than anybody else, except Gouverneur Morris and James Wilson. The basic ideas of the document as it was finally presented to the nation were largely his, and he thundered away day after day in his effort to sway his colleagues. Unlike Jefferson, “he was one of the most formidable parliamentary debaters that ever lived. Without a particle of eloquence or of what is called personal magnetism, with a dry style and a mild unimpassioned delivery, he would nevertheless have been a fair match for Charles Fox or the Younger Pitt.”³

When the Constitution was presented to the States, it was vigorously opposed in nearly every one of them, but the most obdurate were New York and Virginia. Hamilton, Madison and John Jay, later the first Chief Justice of the United States, therefore joined hands in the effort to swing the two States. Their plan was first to win over New York, and to that end they wrote the *Federalist*, originally a series of

¹ There is a good discussion of the whole subject in “The Revolution in Virginia,” by H. J. Eckenrode. Boston. 1916. p. 294 ff.

² Fiske. p. 195.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 204-205.

articles that appeared in two newspapers. It is one of the most celebrated political documents of the Eighteenth Century. In his own State Madison was bitterly opposed by Patrick Henry. Madison was elected to the first session of the Federal House of Representatives; he failed of election to the Senate chiefly because of Henry's opposition.

He was Secretary of State to Jefferson during his entire eight years in the White House. He was elected fourth President of the United States in 1808, and reëlected four years later. He made a poor executive, and was indeed one of the feeblest Presidents in our history. He plunged the country into the wholly unnecessary War of 1812, and he proved himself a very inefficient Commander-in-chief. "He declared war mainly to redress a wrong which ceased to exist before a blow was struck; he then rejected an offer of peace because another wrong was still persisted in; but finally, of his own motion, he accepted a treaty in which the assumed cause of war was not even alluded to."¹ At the end of his second term he retired to his estate at Montpelier, Va., and died there on June 28, 1836. The last nineteen years of his life he devoted mainly to writing long letters to his friends all over the Union regarding political matters. This voluminous correspondence, of great value to the historian and the political theorist, was printed in four volumes in 1865 by order of Congress. Madison also wrote a pamphlet entitled, "Advice to My Country," which was to be read after his death. It is the least important of his works.

Madison's learning in Hebrew, theology, law and history, especially the latter two, was immense. "For minute and thorough knowledge of ancient and modern history and of constitutional law, he was quite unequalled among the Americans of the Revolutionary period; only Hamilton, Ellsworth, and Marshall approached him even at a distance."² He thus approached the writing of the *Federalist* thoroughly equipped. It is probably "the most important contribution of our country to the literature of political science."³ It is, in many ways, the masterpiece of the checks-and-balances theory of government. It first appeared, in large part, in the form of articles in the *Independent Journal*, the *Daily Advertiser*, the *Packet* and other New York news-

¹ "James Madison," by Sydney Howard Gay. Boston. 1898. p. 313.

² Fiske. pp. 189-190.

³ "The *Federalist*: A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States. Being a Collection of Essays by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. In Support of the Constitution Agreed Upon September 17, 1787, by the Federal Convention." With an Introduction by Edward Gaylord Bourne. 2 vols. Washington. 1901. Bourne Introduction. p. vii.

papers during the years 1787-1788. They were collected in the latter year in two volumes and entitled "*The Federalist: A collection of Essays Written in Favor of the New Constitution, as agreed upon by the Federal Convention.*" The authorship of the eighty-five essays has not yet been decided upon, but it is generally held by historical critics that Hamilton wrote forty-nine, Madison fourteen, and Jay four. Three others were probably the joint work of Hamilton and Madison; as for the remaining fifteen there is a wide difference of opinion.

The *Federalist* received wide acclaim on publication, and was extensively reprinted by the press of all the States. In France it won instantaneous recognition, and went through three French editions before the end of the century. It has been translated into German, Spanish and Portuguese, and has served as a guide in the making of several of the Latin-American Constitutions. But the highest compliment paid to it was by its greatest enemy, Thomas Jefferson, who said that it was "the best commentary on the principles of government that ever was written. . . . I confess it has rectified me on several points."¹

Hamilton, as has already been pointed out, wrote most of the essays, but Madison probably wrote the best of them. The latter was in some ways a kind of Al Smith. He was amazingly gifted in the exposition of intricate principles of government to the populace. His articles, like those of his two colleagues, become all the more astonishing when one remembers that they were tossed off hurriedly in the heat of debate, and as mere items in the midst of a very busy life. The following article by Madison was Number X in the series, and first appeared in the *New York Packet* for November 23, 1787. It is a superb analysis of the basic republican principles of the Federal government.

To the People of the State of New York:

Among the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of factions. The friend of popular governments never finds himself so much alarmed for their character and fate, as when he contemplates their propensity to this dangerous vice. He will not fail, there-

¹ Quoted in "Letters and Other Writings of James Madison. Fourth President of the United States. In Four Volumes. Published by Order of Congress." Phila. 1865. Vol. IV. pp. 314-315.

fore, to set a due value on any plan which, without violating the principles to which he is attached, provides a proper cure for it. The instability, injustice, and confusion introduced into the public counsels, have, in truth, been the mortal diseases under which popular governments have everywhere perished; . . . The valuable improvements made by the American constitutions on the popular models, both ancient and modern, cannot certainly be too much admired; but it would be an unwarrantable partiality, to contend that they have as effectively obviated the danger on this side, as was wished and expected. . . .

The inference to which we are brought is, that the *causes* of faction cannot be removed, and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its *effects*.

If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution. When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government, on the other hand, enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens. To secure the public good and private rights against the danger of such a faction, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and form of popular government, is then the great object to which our inquiries are directed. . . .

By what means is this object attainable? Evidently by one of two only. Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority at the same time must be prevented, or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. If the impulse and the opportunity be suffered to coincide, we well know that neither moral nor religious motives can be relied on as an adequate control. They are not found to be such on the injustice and violence of individuals, and lose their efficacy in proportion to the number combined together, that is, in proportion as their efficacy becomes needful.

From this view of the subject it may be concluded that a pure democracy, by which I mean a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in

person, can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction. A common passion of interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole; a communication and concert result from the form of government itself; and there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual. Hence it is that such democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths. Theoretic politicians, who have patronized this species of government, have erroneously supposed that by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions.

A republic, by which I mean a government in which the scheme of representation takes place, opens a different prospect, and promises the cure for which we are seeking. Let us examine the points in which it varies from pure democracy, and we shall comprehend both the nature of the cure and the efficacy which it must derive from the Union.

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of the country, over which the latter may be extended.

The effect of the first difference, is on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. . . . On the other hand, the effect may be inverted. Men of factious tempers, of local prejudices, or of sinister designs, may, by intrigue, by corruption, or by other means first obtain the suffrages, and then betray the interests, of the people. The question resulting is, whether small or extensive republics are more favorable to the election of proper guardians of the public weal; and it is clearly decided in favor of the latter by two obvious considerations: . . .

The other point of difference is, the greater number of citizens and extent of territory which may be brought within the compass

of republican than of democratic government; and it is this circumstance principally which renders factious combinations less to be dreaded in the former than in the latter. The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party; and the smaller the number of individuals composing, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plans of oppression. Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other. Besides other impediments, it may be remarked that, where there is a consciousness of unjust or dishonorable purposes, communication is always checked by distrust in proportion to the number whose concurrence is necessary.

Hence, it clearly appears, that the same advantage which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, if enjoyed by a large over a small, — is enjoyed by the Union over the States composing it. . . . The influence of factious leaders may kindle a flame within their particular States, but will be unable to spread a general conflagration through the other States. A religious sect may degenerate into a political faction in a part of the Confederacy; but the variety of sects dispersed over the entire face of it must secure the national councils against any danger from that source.

In the extent and proper structure of the Union, therefore, we behold a republican remedy for the diseases most incident to republican government. And according to the degree of pleasure and pride we feel in being republicans, ought to be our zeal in cherishing the spirit and supporting the character of Federalists.

PUBLIUS¹

This is probably the most remarkable of all the papers in "The Federalist." It is a sort of summary of the whole Federalist attitude toward government. Time has proven some of its premises to be wrong. The real danger to government is not the pig-headed, im-

¹ Bourne edition of "The Federalist." Vol. I. pp. 62-70.

passioned and ignorant majority, but rather the militant, malevolent minority. The mob generally cares very little about the forms of government; its chief interests are a fair share of the means of subsistence and a reasonable degree of freedom. It asks for more only when it is goaded on by a minority that has something special, and frequently something opposed to the national welfare, to sell. But despite this criticism the arguments of Madison still have some cogency, and are a fine example of mature political thinking.

As a stylist he was not so gifted as Tom Paine, but he was far more able in this direction than Jefferson. He was at times ponderous and involved, but on the whole he wrote a remarkably clear and forceful English. It was urbane, vigorous and persuasive. Madison was probably the most honest writer of the Constitutional era, as well as the most learned one. He never lost himself in facile and grandiose generalizations. He always stuck close to the facts, and never distorted them when appealing to the public. The course of American history has proven some of his arguments not to be well founded, but that does little damage to the man's reputation. He was one of the nation's five or six most able political thinkers, and one of its most remarkable argumentative writers.

5. RICHARD HENRY LEE, GEORGE MASON, GEORGE
WASHINGTON, EDMUND PENDLETON, AND
JOHN MARSHALL

Few other political writers in Virginia during the Revolutionary period deserve mention. Richard Henry Lee had "excellent talents as a conspirator."¹ He started the first intercolonial committee of correspondence, and was one of the leaders in the Continental Congress. In his early days he was a liberal in politics, and was of great service to Patrick Henry when the latter was Governor of Virginia. In February, 1766, he organized in his own county of Westmoreland the first trade association aimed at boycotting British goods imported under the Stamp Act. He was opposed to the Constitution, and wrote a powerful pamphlet about it: "Observations leading to a fair examination of the system of government, proposed by the late Convention: and to several essential and necessary alterations in it. In a number of

¹ "The Revolution in Virginia," by H. J. Eckenrode. Boston. 1916. p. 26.

Letters from the Federal Farmer to the Republican"¹ (1787). It was a calm and fair-minded attack. The burden of it was that the document was undemocratic, and that it placed too much power in the hands of the majority. Toward the end of his life Lee became a conservative: he opposed Jefferson and advocated the state support of religion.

George Mason's fame rests largely upon the Constitution of Virginia and its Bill of Rights, both of which he composed. He was one of the most liberal statesmen of the Old Dominion. He also wrote a vigorous pamphlet, entitled "Objections to the Federal Constitution," to which James Iredell of North Carolina made an elaborate reply. George Washington was little more than a bystander in the revolutionary debates of early Virginia. He was far greater as a soldier and as an administrator than as a writer. The best edition of his writings has been edited by Worthington C. Ford in fourteen volumes (Boston, 1884-1893). It superseded the earlier twelve volume edition by Jared Sparks (New York, 1839). John Marshall, like Washington, was not an able revolutionary thinker, but he knew what men to follow. His "Life of Washington" in five volumes (1804-1807) is still of value, but it is hardly a first-rate performance. It was as Chief Justice of the United States from 1801 until his death in 1837 that he did his best work. Edmund Pendleton was a good aid to George Mason at times. In 1775 and 1776 he was chairman of the Virginia Committee of Safety. He wrote a few mediocre pamphlets.

6. BELLES LETTRES IN VIRGINIA: 1750-1810

a. PARSON WEEMS

There was a stagnation of mental life in America between the Revolutionary period and the first decade of the Nineteenth Century, but nowhere was it more apparent than in the South, and especially in Virginia. That Commonwealth gave the nation some of its most powerful politicians and orators, but of literary men it produced not one. The people there were not consumed with a passion to produce a national literature immediately, as were the Hartford Wits. They

¹ This pamphlet, together with a great many others, is reprinted in "Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States, 1787-1788," edited by P. L. Ford. Brooklyn. 1888. There is also interesting material in the same author's "Essays on the Constitution of the United States, 1787-1788." Brooklyn. 1892.

were not interested in literature at all. The College of William and Mary had still far to go before it reached the level of Harvard or of the College of New Jersey (Princeton), and there were fewer books in the Colony than probably anywhere else in British America.

There were, of course, some writers, but of these not one was a professional. Of the lot Mason Locke Weems, or Parson Weems, as he is better known, was unquestionably the most interesting. He was the first sob sister of America, and "as a purveyor of American folk-lore, whether distilled from native legends or the synthetic product of his own fecund imagination, he had no rival in his own day or in the century that followed him."¹ He lived in a period when newspapers were very scarce, and the machinery for spreading scandal was not yet invented. "The underlying population gulped its morality raw, so to speak, from specially prepared pamphlet-packages. Of all the purveyors of such topical piousness, none certainly wielded a livelier pen than Weems. He combined most of the virtues and talents distributed in our own day among such diverse evangelical artists as the Rev. Billy Sunday, Dr. Frank Crane, the late Dr. Bryan, and the chief counsel of the Anti-Saloon League."²

He was one—probably the youngest—of nineteen children. He was born in Maryland in 1759, and when still in his teens he journeyed to England to study medicine. Later he dropped medicine, and made a second trip to England to be ordained in the Episcopal Church. He returned to Maryland and became rector of Westminster parish and conductor of a school for girls. But he was a failure in both. The rich did not take to him on account of his unseemly evangelical zeal, and the poor could not help laughing at his antics. So he took to peddling books, and then graduated to writing them. For his modest pretensions he was excellent in both.³ His first venture in authorship was "The Philanthropist: or a Good Twenty-Five Cents Worth of Political Love Powder for Honest Adamsites and Jeffersonites" (1795). Washington praised it very highly for its wise counsel.

But Weems's most celebrated book was his biography of the first President: "A History of the Life and Death, Virtues and Exploits of General George Washington. With Curious Anecdotes Equally

¹ "Parson Weems of the Cherry-Tree," by Harold Kalleck. N. Y. 1928. p. 4.

² *Ibid.* pp. 189-190.

³ See "American Historical Liars," by Albert Bushnell Hart. *Harper's Magazine*. October, 1915. Vol. 131. No. 785. p. 732 ff.

Honourable to Himself and Exemplary to His Young Countrymen." It was first published in 1801, and ran through twenty editions in Weems's life-time, and eventually reached over seventy, not to mention many pirated editions. The first edition had only 80 pages of text, but by the time the fifth edition was reached, in 1806, the book had grown to a quarto volume of more than 250 pages. Why it caught on immediately is easily to be understood. It was full of the cheap moralizing and commonplace imagination that have attracted the multitudes from time immemorial. The cherry-orchard anecdote — perhaps the most celebrated piece of folk-lore that has yet come out of America — is a fine example of both. It follows in full:

The following anecdote is a *case in point*. It is too valuable to be lost, and too true to be doubted; for it was communicated to me by the same excellent lady to whom I am indebted for the last.

"When George," said she, "was about six years old, he was made the wealthy master of a *hatchet!* of which, like most little boys, he was immoderately fond; and was going about chopping everything that came in his way. One day in the garden, where he often amused himself hacking his mother's pea sticks, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet on the body of a beautiful young English cherry-tree, which he barked so terribly, that I don't believe the tree ever got the better of it. The next morning the old gentleman, finding out what had befallen the tree, which, by the by, was a great favourite, came into the house; and with much warmth asked for the mischievous author, declaring at the same time, that he would not have taken five guineas for his tree. Nobody could tell him anything about it. Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance. '*George,*' said his father, 'do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden?' This was a tough question; and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself: and looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth brightened with the inexpressible charm of all conquering truth, he bravely cried out, 'I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet.' — Run to my arms, you dearest boy, cried his father in transports, run to my arms; glad am I, George, that you killed my tree; for you have paid me for it a thousand fold. Such an act of heroism in my son is more worth than a thousand

trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold.”¹

The Parson's other books were almost as good, and for fifty years after their respective publication dates sold almost as well. The titles of some of them follow:

“The bad wife's looking glass, Or, God's revenge against cruelty to husbands. Exemplified in the awful history of the beautiful, but depraved Mrs. Rebecca Cotton, who most inhumanly murdered her husband, John Cotton, Esq. for which horrid act God permitted her . . . to be cut off by her brother, Stephen Kannady, May 5th 1807. With a number of incidents and anecdotes, most extraordinary and instructive.” (First edition, Charleston, 1821, 44 pp.)

“God's revenge against duelling: or, The Duellist's looking glass; exhibiting that gentlemanly mode of turning the corner.” (Philadelphia, 1821, 48 pp.)

“God's revenge against gambling. Exemplified in the miserable lives and untimely deaths of a number of persons of both sexes.” (Philadelphia, 1816, 47 pp.)

“God's revenge against murder; or, The drowned wife.” (Philadelphia, 1808, 40 pp.)

“Hymen's Recruiting-Sergeant; or the Matrimonial Tat-too, for Old Bachelors.

*Inviting all both big and small,
A lovely wife to take;
Nor longer lead — Oh! shameful deed!
The life of worthless rake.”*

(Philadelphia, 1802, 48 pp.)

“The Drunkard's Looking-Glass Reflecting a Faithful likeness of the Drunkard in Sundry Very Interesting Attitudes, With lively representations of the strange Cases which he cuts at different Stages of his Disease; As First, when He has only ‘a drop in his eye’; second, when He is ‘half-shaved’; third, when

¹ Edition Philadelphia. 1918. pp. 22-23.

he is getting 'a little on the staggers or so'; and fourth and fifth, and so on,

Till He is quite capsized,
'Snug under the Table or with the Dogs';
and
can stick to the Floor without Holding on." (Baltimore, 1818,
59 pp.)

The latter book was full of horrible cases, such as,

Of a clergyman, in Virginia, who getting "a drop in the eye," made himself a complete ADAMITE.

Of a young Lawyer, who in a drunken frolic, was miserably non-suited.

Of a young doctor, who, in a drunken frolic, inverted the order of his profession—making himself a patient in place of a physician.

An Awful history of young Dred Drake, who, in a drunken frolic, had his brains dashed out by riding a race. (Communicated by Jeffry Early, Esq.)

Of one Johnson, who in a Demoniac state of drunkenness, murdered a little pedler.

Of William Harverson, who, in the demoniac of drunkenness, murdered David Russell; for which he was hung. Communicated by an eye witness of his execution.

Parson Weems always preached against the seven deadly sins: drunkenness, gambling, duelling, adultery, cruelty to husbands, murder, and old-bachelordom. But the first was apparently his pet hatred. He said of it:

No more that the Almighty directs his anathemas so fearfully against drunkenness. For surely if there be a sin under Heaven that tends to *petrify the heart*, to banish love, and to render man tenfold more a child of Hell than any other sin, it is drunkenness.
. . . Drunkenness is a flood that drowns the whole moral birth

of a soul, suffocating the very "*storgees of nature*," those deep-rooted affections which the beasts themselves delight to obey.¹

Weems himself was not, strictly speaking, a Prohibitionist, but he was one of the early advocates of the idea. Why the Anti-Saloon-League has not used his pamphlet against drunkenness is a mystery. The numerous illustrations in line add greatly to its moral effectiveness. The world at large will not forget him. Were he alive today, he would make the best Hearst reporter ever heard of.

b. WILLIAM WIRT AND JOHN RANDOLPH

Neither Wirt nor Randolph belongs strictly in a literary history of the United States, but beside Parson Weems they were the only prose writers of any merit or interest whatever that Virginia produced between 1750 and 1810. The first was born in Maryland in 1772, but at an early age moved to Virginia, and died there in 1834. He was Attorney-General of the United States for twelve years, beginning with 1817, and did much to raise that office to prominence.² Before his day it was little better than a clerk's office. He was one of the most eminent lawyers of his time. "As an orator he is entitled to fully as high rank as a lawyer. In the judgment of many of his contemporaries he excelled either Pinckney or Webster in the art of elocution."³ In 1808 appeared his first purely literary attempt, "Letters of a British Spy." It is a series of essays dealing with geology, education, government, etc., and is written in the form of letters by an Englishman of rank in Richmond to a member of Parliament. The book was first published as a serial in the Richmond *Argus* in 1803. It went through twelve editions, but it is of small worth. One of the essays in it, "The Blind Preacher," enjoyed a certain popularity on the Continent, where it was translated into several languages. But of all his writings or doings Wirt will be remembered longest for his biography of Patrick Henry, which was first published in 1818. It is far from a first-rate work. There is too much imagination in it for one thing, and the writing is frequently heavy-handed. But it also contains material about Henry that is not to be obtained elsewhere. Even the excellent

¹ "The Drunkard's Looking-Glass. . . ." Eighth edition. Baltimore. 1843. p. 45.

² "Eight Great American Lawyers," by Horace A. Hagan. Oklahoma City. 1923. p. 3 ff.

³ *Ibid.* p. 48.

biography of the same subject by Moses Coit Tyler leans heavily on it.

John Randolph, or, as he preferred to be called, Randolph of Roanoke, will be remembered for three things: he was one of the most colorful personalities of his time, he helped mightily to transform Virginia from the *alma mater* of the Republic to its frantic opponent,¹ and he had "the wickedest tongue that ever hung in the head of an American Congressman, or at any rate, in the head of one who had both the courage and the wit to use it."² His "prevailing spiritual tone was one of grief and wretchedness,"³ and he carried over much of it into his public utterances. He was born in Virginia on June 2, 1773.⁴ He studied for a time at Princeton and at Columbia. In 1799 he was elected to Congress, and seven years later came his celebrated break with Jefferson, whom he called, for the remainder of his life, "St. Thomas of Conigsbury." He fought Henry Clay on April 8, 1826, and in 1830 was sent on a mission to Russia. He died in Philadelphia in 1833.

His two best-known political utterances are the following: (a) "When I speak of my country, I mean the Commonwealth of Virginia." (b) "Fellow citizens, he [Edward Livingston] is a man of splendid abilities, but utterly corrupt. Like rotten mackerel by moonlight, he shines and stinks." The only piece of writing by him that can be classified as literature is "Letters of John Randolph To A Young Relative, Embracing A Series of Years. From Early Youth, to Mature Manhood." It was published in Philadelphia one year after his death. It is pretty slim stuff.

C. ST. GEORGE TUCKER

Tucker was born in Bermuda on July 10, 1752, and died in Nelson county, Va., on November 10, 1828. He fought in the Revolution, and was the step-father of Randolph of Roanoke. In 1790 he was made professor of law at the College of William and Mary. For a time he

¹ "Randolph of Roanoke: A Political Fantastic," by Gerald W. Johnson. N. Y. 1929. p. 20.

² *Ibid.* p. 15.

³ "Damaged Souls," by Gamaliel Bradford. Boston. 1923. p. 150.

⁴ The most complete biography of Randolph is "John Randolph of Roanoke. 1773-1833," by William Cabell Bruce. 2 vols. N. Y. 1922. The best character study of him is Mr. Johnson's. Mr. Bradford's essay leaves much to be desired, either as interpretation or "psychography."

was a judge in the Superior Court of the State. He was an excellent lawyer, and a legal scholar of some standing. His edition (1803) of Blackstone's "Commentaries" is well-known to the legal profession even today. He also published a collection of ineffective political satires, some dramas and a few poems. Of the latter the only one that attained any popularity was "Resignation," or "Days of My Youth," which was a favorite of John Adams. It is a very feeble performance. It follows in full.

*Days of my youth,
Ye have glided away;
Hairs of my youth,
Ye are frosted and gray;
Eyes of my youth,
Your keen sight is no more;
Cheeks of my youth,
Ye are furrowed all o'er;
Strength of my youth,
All your vigor is gone;
Thoughts of my youth,
Your gay visions are flown.*

*Days of my youth,
I wish not your recall;
Hairs of my youth,
I'm content ye should fall;
Eyes of my youth,
You much evil have seen;
Cheeks of my youth,
Bathed in tears have you been;
Thoughts of my youth,
You have led me astray;
Strength of my youth,
Why lament your decay?*

*Days of my age,
Ye will shortly be past;
Pains of my age,
In true wisdom delight;*

*Eyes of my age,
 Be religion your light;
 Thoughts of my age,
 Dread ye not the cold sod;
 Hopes of my age,
 Be ye fixed on your God.¹*

Tucker also contributed a few stanzas to "The Belles of Williamsburg," a poem of sixteen stanzas in praise of the ladies of the old capital of Virginia, by Dr. James McClurg (1747-1825).

d. THE REVOLUTIONARY BALLADS OF VIRGINIA

Virginia produced some of the most eminent political pamphleteers and military leaders of the revolution, but in the field of ballad writing it was not so fortunate. Only two of the ballads are worth mentioning. "Virginia Banishing Tea," which follows, was written in 1774 by a young woman, and all that is known of her is that she was "a native of Virginia, endowed with all the graces of a cultivated mind, pleasant external qualities, and a model of patriotism, worthy the emulation of many more conspicuous."² In other words, nothing is known of her.

Virginia Banishing Tea

*Begone, pernicious, baneful tea,
 With all Pandora's ills possessed,
 Hyson, no more beguiled by thee,
 My noble sons shall be oppressed.*

*To Britain fly, where gold enslaves,
 And venal men their birth-right sell;
 Tell North and his bribed clan of knaves,
 Their bloody acts were made in hell.*

*In Henry's reign those acts began
 Which sacred rules of justice broke
 North now pursues the hellish plan,
 To fix on us his slavish yoke.*

¹ "Southern Writers," edited by W. P. Trent. N. Y. 1905. pp. 60-61.

² "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution," edited by F. Moore. N. Y. 1866. p. 59.

*But we oppose, and will be free,
 This great good cause we will defend;
 Nor bribe, nor Gage, nor North decree,
 Shall make us "at his feet to bend."*

*From Anglia's ancient sons we come;
 Those heroes who for freedom fought;
 In freedom's cause we'll march; their fame,
 By their example greatly taught.*

*Our king we love, but North we hate,
 Nor will to him submission own;
 If death's our doom, we'll brave our fate,
 But pay allegiance to the throne.*

*Then rouse, my sons! from slavery free
 Your suffering homes; from God's high wrath;
 Gird on your steel; give liberty
 To all who follow in our path.¹*

"American 'Hearts of Oak'" (1775) was written by J. W. Hewlings, a native of Nansemond, Va., where he died in 1793. It follows:

*Come rouse up, my lads, and join this great cause,
 In defense of your liberty, your property, and laws!
 'Tis to honor we call you, stand up for your right,
 And ne'er let our foes say, we are put to the flight.
 For so just is our cause, and so valiant our men
 We always are ready, steady boys, steady;
 We'll fight for our freedom again and again.*

*The Scotch politicians have laid a deep scheme,
 By invading America to bring Charlie;
 And if the Scotch mist's not removed from the throne,
 The crown's not worth wearing, the kingdom's undone.*

*The placemen, and commoners, have taken a bribe
 To betray their own country, and the empire beside;
 And though the colonies stand condemned by some,
 There are no rebels here, but are traitors at home.*

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 59-61.

*The arbitrary minister, he acts as he please,
 He wounds our constitution, and breaks through our laws;
 His troops they are landed, his ships they are moor'd,
 But boys all stand together, they will fall by the sword.*

*The great Magna Charta is wounded severe;
 By accounts from the doctors, 'tis almost past cure.
 Let's defend it with the sword, or die with the braves,
 For we had better die in freedom, than live and be slaves.*

*They tax us contrary to reason and right,
 Expecting that we are not able to fight;
 But to draw their troops home, I do think would be best,
 For Providence always defends the oppressed.*

*The valiant Bostonians have enter'd the field,
 And declare they will fall there before they will yield;
 A noble example! In them we'll confide,
 We'll march to their town, stand or fall by their side.*

*An union through the colonies will ever remain,
 And ministerial taxation will be but in vain,
 For we are all resolvèd to die or be free;
 So they may repeal the acts, for repeal'd they must be.¹*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution," edited by F. Moore. N. Y. 1866. pp. 103-105.

CHAPTER XI

Pennsylvania

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Pennsylvania

A. THE POLITICIANS

I. TOM PAINE—THE PENMAN OF THE REVOLUTION

BECAUSE OF ITS CENTRAL POSITION, ITS POLICY OF RELIGIOUS toleration, and its liberal form of government, Pennsylvania, during the Eighteenth Century, was a haven of refuge for oppressed nationals of nearly all the European countries. It harbored more races and persecuted sectaries within its borders than any other Colony. There were Dutch, Swedes, Germans, English, Irish, and Scotch-Irish; and Quakers, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Catholics, Dunkers, Moravians, and Mennonites. Before the Seven Years' War the Quakers were in control of the colonial government, but from then onward until the failure of the Whiskey Insurrection (1794) the Scotch-Irish were in control. During the Revolution Pennsylvania occupied a very important position. At first the loyalists were especially strong, because of the large Church of England element within its borders, and because of the general satisfaction with the liberal provincial government, which left the people much less embittered than did the governments of, say, Massachusetts and Virginia.

Nevertheless, the Whig party, led by John Dickinson, Thomas Mifflin, and Joseph Read proved successful in the end, and the Colony thereafter helped mightily in bringing the rebellion to a propitious conclusion. It contributed some of the leading statesmen and a leading financial backer of the Revolution, Robert Morris. The two Continental Congresses (1774 and 1775-1781) met for the most part in Philadelphia. It was in the same city that the Second Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence. Many of the battles were fought within the borders of the State, and Washington's army spent the Winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge.

The Penns were deprived of their governmental rights in 1776. The first State constitution was the work of the radical party. In the beginning there was strong opposition in the State to the Federal Con-

stitution, but after considerable debate it ratified the document on December 22, 1787. Philadelphia was the seat of the Federal government, except for a short time in 1789-1790, until it was removed to Washington in 1800.

In the field of *belles lettres* Philadelphia occupied a very important position at the time. From 1790 to 1810 it was the cultural centre of the United States, succeeding Hartford, which occupied the place from 1760 to 1790. It gave the nation Philip Freneau, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Benjamin Franklin, and Charles Brockden Brown. They produced the first really indigenous American literature, and thus paved the way for the Knickerbocker School. But even if it had done nothing whatever in the way of *belles lettres* Pennsylvania would deserve to be remembered for its grand line of political pamphleteers, of whom the greatest was unquestionably Tom Paine.

"The Filthy Tom Paine," the second President of the United States, who should have known better, called him. And the twenty-sixth President of the United States went John Adams one better when he characterized the author of "Common Sense" as "the dirty little atheist." But Napoleon and Abraham Lincoln thought differently. The first wrote to Paine: "A statue of gold ought to be erected to you in every city in the universe."¹ The second said, "I never tire of reading Tom Paine."² There can be little doubt that the verdict of history will be with Napoleon and Lincoln. No list of the 500 greatest men in the world's history can be complete without his name. He was "the first modern internationalist, at home wherever rights were to be won or wrongs corrected."³ He was the first to bring the rationalism of the Eighteenth Century home to the plain people, and thus probably did more to spread political and theological enlightenment than any other one man who ever lived. "The Rights of Man" and "The Age of Reason," as pieces of scholarship, are sophomoric performances, but as historic events are beyond calculation in their importance. Tyranny and superstition were dealt crippling blows when these books appeared. Paine was perhaps the greatest pamphleteer of all time,⁴ surely the greatest of those who ever practised in America. It is he

¹ Quoted in "Thomas Paine: The Apostle of Liberty," by John E. Remsburg. N. Y. 1917. p. 211.

² Quoted *ibid.* p. 130.

³ "Main Currents in American Thought," by V. L. Parrington. 2 vols. N. Y. 1927. Vol. I. p. 327.

⁴ Some have maintained that Paine was the author of the "Letters of Junius." The most able defense of this contention is "Thomas Paine: Was he Junius?", by William Henry Burr. The Freethought Publishing Company. San Francisco. 1890.

who should be called "the penman of the Revolution," and not John Dickinson, who, after all, did little more than write some of the official documents of the Continental Congress.¹ Finally, for sheer picturesqueness of personality none of the Fathers could equal him. He "thought in prose and acted epics. He drew horizons on paper and pursued the infinite in deeds."²

Thomas Paine was born on January 29, 1737, in Thetford county, Norfolk, England,³ the son of Quaker parents. He attended the local grammar school for a short time, showing a decided bent toward mechanical things. In 1759 he left school and became a stay-maker in Sandwich, Kent. Three years later he became an excise-man, but was soon dismissed for recording places he had not visited. Thereupon he resumed stay-making, and also did some teaching on the side. In 1768 he again got himself a job as an excise-man, and was again dismissed, this time for general incompetence and for what would nowadays be called unionizing activities. So he resorted to stay-making for a third time. Thus he lived on for the next nine years, poor and in despair, and burdened with a strangely ignorant wife, from whom he was separated. Then a stroke of good luck came his way. He met Benjamin Franklin in London, and Franklin was so impressed by the eyes of the thirty-five-year-old failure that he decided at once to do something for him. It was a happy meeting for miserable Paine, and no less than a god-send for the Colonies.

Franklin gave Paine a letter of introduction to his son-in-law Richard Bache and to other people of prominence in Philadelphia. Paine immediately set sail for the New World, arriving in Philadelphia on November 30, 1774. He first thought of starting a seminary for young ladies in the city, but Bache presented him to Robert Aitken, who took him on as the first editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. Its first number appeared in January, 1775, and Paine was editor for the year and a half following. He contributed a great deal to the magazine. In

¹ See "Thomas Paine and the American Revolution," by David S. Muzzey. The *American Review*. Bloomingdale, Ill. May-June, 1926. Vol. 4. No. 3. pp. 278-288.

² "Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle," by Henry Noel Brailsford. London. 1913. p. 57.

³ There is no really good biography of Paine. The two most popular ones are "Life of Thomas Paine. . . . To Which is added a Sketch of Paine by William Cobbett," by Moncure D. Conway. 2 vols. N. Y. 1892; and the biography by Blanchard in "The Complete Works of Thomas Paine. With a Sketch of His Life," by Calvin Blanchard. In one volume. Chicago. 1880. Both biographies contain all the essential facts, but they are poorly written and not always accurate. Conway has also edited all of Paine's writings in four volumes. N. Y. 1894-96. The most recent biography is "Thomas Paine: Prophet and Martyr of Democracy," by Mary Agnes Best. N. Y. 1927. It is by far the most judicious. The pamphlet literature on Paine is tremendous, and occupies an entire box in the N. Y. Public Library catalogue room.

January, 1776, appeared "Common Sense," which instantly made him the most influential political writer in America. In it appeared the first appeal for complete independence, and it probably turned the scales in favor of absolute separation from England. In 1776 Paine helped frame the State Constitution. In the same year he enlisted as a private in the Continental Army, and before long was made aide-de-camp to General Nathaniel Greene.

In December, 1776, appeared the first number of "The Crisis," later renamed "The American Crisis." It began with the now celebrated words, "These are the times that try men's souls." It was received enthusiastically by the army, and did much to bolster up its waning spirit. On April 17 of the following year Paine was made secretary of the committee of foreign affairs of the Continental Congress, but was removed in January, 1779, for attacking Gouverneur Morris, who did all he could in his later life to injure him. In 1781 Paine and Laurens were sent to France to solicit aid for the Colonies in their struggle against England. They succeeded. Paine then returned to Philadelphia, and for a time floundered about, very poor and miserable. He was neglected by Congress, though Washington and others tried to help him. In 1784, however, the State of New York gave him a confiscated loyalist estate of 277 acres at New Rochelle, where his monument now stands.

In March, 1791, while in England, Paine wrote "The Rights of Man," in answer to Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution." The book was dedicated to Washington, and was translated into French, and exerted a powerful influence in both continents. As a result of it he was tried for treason in England in December, 1792, and was convicted and outlawed. He therefore fled to France, where three departments chose him to represent them in the Convention. He was on the committee which drafted a new constitution for France. He sought to save the King, and thus alienated Robespierre and the other terrorist leaders. He was put in the Luxembourg prison on December 27, 1793, and remained there till November, 1794, when he was liberated at the request of Monroe, who had by that time replaced Morris as minister to France. During all the time that he was *persona non grata* to the French revolutionary leaders, he narrowly escaped the guillotine. He completed the first part of "The Age of Reason" just before his imprisonment. It was published in 1794. It was because of this book that the erroneous impression arose that he was an atheist. In 1796 Paine wrote "The Decline and Fall of the

English System of Finance," which was translated into many European languages and attracted much attention. About the same time he wrote what included probably his most mature reflections on the relationship between the government and the individual. It was entitled "Agrarian Justice," and was published in 1797. In form it was a reply to a sermon by Bishop Watson of Llandoff, entitled "The Wisdom and Goodness of God in Having Made Both Rich and Poor." The same Bishop Watson, incidentally, wrote "An Apology for the Bible," a reply to Paine's "Age of Reason." The "Apology" was widely distributed among Harvard undergraduates.

Paine returned to the United States in 1802, and found himself at once the victim of a bitter *odium theologicum et politicum*. The epithets "atheist" and "jail-bird" were hurled at him wherever he went. The driver of a stage-coach in Trenton refused him a seat on the ground that he had had one team of horses struck by lightning, and did not want to invite a repetition of the disaster. Paine was also denied the right to vote in Westchester by a supervisor who had been a loyalist while Paine was serving as a private in the Continental Army. Even on his death-bed the great pamphleteer was not allowed rest. Quaker, Catholic and Protestant ministers pestered him for recantations of his unorthodox views of religion, but to the everlasting glory of the dying fighter they all failed. He died in New Rochelle on June 8, 1809. He was buried there, but in 1819 his body was removed to England by William Cobbett.

The *Boston Gazette* for April 29, 1776, said of "Common Sense": "Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of a publication it could not have fallen on a more fortunate period than the time in which [it] made its appearance." In the words of the historian Benson J. Lossing, the book "was the earliest and most powerful appeal in behalf of independence and probably did more to fix that idea firmly in the public mind than any other instrumentality."¹ It sold more than 100,000 copies in less than four months, and its effect on the Colonies was beyond calculation. Paine argued that governmental policies rest on economic foundations, and that the economic consequences to America of the English connection were baneful. This stand was not wholly correct as a matter of fact, but it set the colonists thinking along a new line, and thus heightened their desire for independence. He also attacked the king-principle, and voiced "the first clear, far-

¹ Quoted by Remsburg, p. 28.

carrying appeal for republicanism addressed to American ears.”¹ His basic principles regarding the matter were so clearly stated as to be understood by the lowliest mechanic. He wrote:

Society in every state is a blessing, but Government, even in its best stage, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one: for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries by a Government, which we might expect in a country *without a Government*, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer. Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence; the palaces of kings are built upon the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For were the impulses of conscience clear, uniform and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other lawgiver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case advises him, out of two evils, to choose the least. Wherefore, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows that whatever form thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us, with the least expence and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others.²

There was much more in “Common Sense.” It stated the principle of the Monroe Doctrine twenty-one years before that document was made public to the world. It urged a Federal Constitution four years before Hamilton ever thought of the idea. And it called for absolute independence one year before Jefferson composed the Declaration of Independence. Paine’s practical originality in governmental affairs was almost incredible. But he did not write “Common Sense” to change the minds of constitutional lawyers or university political theorists. He wrote first and last to rouse the people, and for that he had at his command a marvelous style: clear, vigorous and completely persuasive. His grammar was at times shaky, but his meaning was always instantly apparent, and his expression of it of such force as to move armies. Consider the following peroration to the book:

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former

¹ Parrington. Vol. I. p. 330.

² Blanchard edition of the Complete Works of Thomas Paine. p. 230.

innocence? neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the Continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the Guardians of his Image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.

O! ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the Globe. Asia and Africa hath long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.¹

Paine wrote the first number of "The American Crisis" one day after Washington's army was hurled from Long Island, just before Christmas of 1776. The Commander-in-chief ordered that it be read at the head of each regiment on the eve of the battle of Trenton. The Americans won that battle and that at Princeton a few days later. The soldiers chose as their watchword the opening sentence of the marvelously sonorous exordium:

These are the times that try men's souls. The Summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it *now*, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its

¹ *Ibid.* p. 241.

goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated. Britain, with an army to enforce her tyranny, has declared that she has a right (*not only* to TAX) but "to BIND *us in ALL CASES WHATSOEVER*," and if being *bound in that manner*, is not slavery, then is there not such a thing as slavery upon earth. Even the expression is impious: for so unlimited a power can belong only to God.¹

Paine continued to issue "The American Crisis" for seven years more, now ridiculing the British generals, and now attacking the British government. He pursued the enemy with fierce satire, and added a joyousness and a much needed righteousness to the American cause.

In 1791 he wrote "The Rights of Man," in reply to Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution." It was a brilliant performance, and was without doubt "the most influential English contribution to the revolutionary movement."² Burke argued on the basis of history and of the inviolability of contract between the people and the sovereign. Paine retorted that to do so was to indulge in the veriest of sophistries, and to be the slave of history and the vassal of a mere illusion. To try to bring over into the realm of politics the principles of private property, he held, was absurd, childish, and against the public good. He allied himself with the great English and French romantics: Price, Priestly and Rousseau. The virtues of government, he held, were at best supernumerary. He said:

Great part of that order which reigns among mankind is not the effect of government. It has its origin in the principles of society and the natural constitution of man. It existed prior to government, and would exist if the formality of government was abolished. The mutual dependence and reciprocal interest which man has upon man, and all the parts of civilised community upon each other, create that great chain of connection which holds it together. The landholder, the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, and every occupation, prospers by the aid which each receives from the other, and from the whole. Common interest regulates their concerns, and forms their law; and the

¹ Blanchard edition of the Complete Works of Thomas Paine. p. 242.

² Parrington. Vol. I. p. 334.

laws which common usage ordains, have a greater influence than the laws of government. In fine, society performs for itself almost everything which is ascribed to government.

To understand the nature and quantity of government proper for man, it is necessary to attend to his character. As Nature created him for social life, she fitted him for the station she intended. In all cases she made his natural wants greater than his individual powers. No one man is capable, without the aid of society, of supplying his own wants; and those wants, acting upon every individual, impel the whole of them into society, as naturally as gravitation acts to a centre.

But she has gone further. She has not only forced man into society by a diversity of wants which the reciprocal aid of each other can supply, but she has implanted in him a system of social affections, which, though not necessary to his existence, are essential to his happiness. There is no period in life when this love for society ceases to act. It begins and ends with our being.

If we examine with attention into the composition and constitution of man, the diversity of his wants, and the diversity of talents in different men for reciprocally accommodating the wants of each other, his propensity to society, and consequently to preserve the advantages resulting from it, we shall easily discover, that a great part of what is called government is mere imposition.

Government is no farther necessary than to supply the few cases to which society and civilisation are not conveniently competent; and instances are not wanting to show, that everything which government can usefully add thereto, has been performed by the common consent of society, without government.¹

“The Rights of Man” became the accepted exposition of the Republican doctrines of Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin, and the *bête noire* of the Federalists. Madison looked upon it as the best statement of the principles upon which the United States was founded.²

Paine carried his speculations upon the relationship between the community and the individual a bit further in his little known book, “Agrarian Justice.” In this slender volume he grappled with the problem of poverty and came out with a proposal that reminds one

¹ Blanchard edition. pp. 320-324.

² On this point see Muzzey, p. 284 ff.

very much of that in Henry George's "Progress and Poverty." Among other things he suggested a 10% inheritance tax to provide a fund for the endowment of the young and the pensioning of the old.¹

Next to "Common Sense" Paine's best known book is "The Age of Reason." Looked at in the light of modern Biblical criticism it is no more than a collection of platitudes, but in its day it raised a storm. It set the author down as the advocate of the Devil, a menace to society and a curse upon the land. The English publisher of the book was convicted of blasphemy, and no respectable publisher in the United States dared to put it out. It enjoyed, however, a tremendous surreptitious sale. Paine was really no more than a fairly mild deist. Were he alive today he would be gladly accepted by any Unitarian church. His basic theological and ethical doctrines were very simple, and it is strange how any misconception arose about them. He stated them in his "Profession of Faith" thus:

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise; they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believ-

¹ The best discussion of "Agrarian Justice" is to be found in Parrington. Vol. I. p. 337 ff. Mr. Parrington's chapter on Paine is exceptionally good.

ing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.¹

Paine considers all the arguments that have been presented for the existence of the Christian God, and disposes of them. He then takes up the Virgin Birth, and calls it a libel upon the human race, after which he deals with all the other miracles in the Bible. But his most powerful thunder he leaves for organized religion, as witness:

The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries, that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion. It has been the most dishonourable belief against the character of the divinity, the most destructive to morality, and the peace and happiness of man, that ever was propagated since man began to exist. It is better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possible, a thousand devils to roam at large, and to preach publicly the doctrine of devils, if there were any such, than that we permitted one such impostor and monster as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the Bible prophets, to come with the pretended word of God in his mouth, and have credit among us.

Whence arose all the horrid assassinations of whole nations of men, women, and infants, with which the Bible is filled; and the bloody persecutions, and tortures unto death and religious wars, that since that time have laid Europe in blood and ashes; whence arose they, but from this impious thing called revealed religion, and this monstrous belief that God has spoken to man? The lies of the Bible have been the cause of the one, and the lies of the Testament of the other.

Some Christians pretend that Christianity was not established by the sword; but of what period of time do they speak? It was impossible that twelve men could begin with the sword: they had not the power; but no sooner were the professors of Christianity sufficiently powerful to employ the sword than they did so, and the stake and faggot too; and Mahomet could not do it sooner. By the same spirit that Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (if the story be true) he would cut off his head, and the head of his master, had he been able. Besides this, Chris-

¹ Blanchard edition. p. 1.

tianity grounds itself originally upon the Bible, and the Bible was established altogether by the sword, and that in the worst use of it—not to terrify, but to extirpate. The Jews made no converts: they butchered all. The Bible is the sire of the Testament, and both are called the *word of God*. The Christians read both books; the ministers preach from both books; and this thing called Christianity is made up of both. It is then false to say that Christianity was not established by the sword.¹

Paine was not an original thinker in matters of religion. He did not have Feuerbach's profundity nor Strauss's learning. Even Calvin Blanchard, his most laudatory biographer, is obliged to admit that "Mr. Paine's theological views are as superficial as his religious conceptions are profound."² But he made it possible for the agnostic thinkers who followed him to pursue their researches without incurring the moral obloquy that hounded him for the rest of his life. What is even more important, he cast a strong doubt into the masses with regard to their religions. He was the greatest apostle of enlightenment to the Forgotten Man.

Paine also tried his hand at poetry in his battles against the British Crown. Few of his verses are extant. The following poem was entitled "Liberty Tree," and appeared in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* some time in 1775, when he was editor:

Liberty Tree

*In a chariot of light from the regions of day,
The Goddess of Liberty came;
Ten thousand celestials directed the way,
And hither conducted the dame.
A fair budding branch from the gardens above,
Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love,
And the plant she named Liberty Tree.*

*The celestial exotic struck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourished and bore;
The fame of its fruits drew the nations around,
To seek out this peaceable shore.*

¹ Blanchard edition, pp. 98-99.

² Blanchard, p. 52.

*Unmindful of names or distinction they came,
 For freemen like brothers agree;
 With one spirit endued, they one friendship pursued,
 And their temple was Liberty Tree.*

*Beneath this fair tree, like the patriarchs of old,
 Their bread in contentment they ate,
 Unvexed with the troubles of silver and gold,
 The cares of the grand and the great.
 With timber and tar they Old England supplied,
 And supported her power on the sea;
 Her battles they fought, without getting a groat,
 For the honor of Liberty Tree.*

*But hear, O ye swains, 'tis a tale most profane,
 How all the tyrannical powers,
 Kings, Commons, and Lords, are uniting amain,
 To cut down this guardian of ours;
 From the east to the west blow the trumpet of arms,
 Through the land let the sound of it flee,
 Let the far and the near, all unite with a cheer,
 In defense of our Liberty Tree.¹*

Paine was not a speculative thinker, either by temperament or training. He was not a student, like John Adams or Jefferson or Madison. He was primarily a man of intense feeling. He absorbed ideas like the proverbial sponge, and then translated them into his fiery, quick, sonorous prose that read, and still reads, like epic poetry. Of all the men who lived in America in the Eighteenth Century he caught its spirit most truly. In fact, he was the epitome of it: its rationalism, its romanticism, its world-shaking restlessness. Man was God to him, and in his service he risked his life a thousand times. His loves were as terrific as his hates. If his onslaught on the priesthood is one of the most bitter ever written, his defence of democracy is perhaps the most moving ever put on paper. "The filthy Tom Paine," as John Adams called him, was almost literally consumed with a passion for his fellow-men. He taught the Americans the glories of revolution, and he brought to them a new philosophy of life, a new system of

¹ "American War Ballads and Lyrics," edited by George Cary Eggleston. 2 vols. N. Y. 1889. Vol. I. pp. 23-24.

values, more worthy things to die for and to live for. The *vulgus* has seldom had a better friend. Surely he was one of its greatest teachers. The dignity and the infinite perfectibility that he tried to impose upon it were perhaps beyond its grasp, but at least they gave it new ideals, and Paine's effort will forever shine as one of massive grandeur. His books have sold into the millions. "It is claimed that from five to ten thousand copies are printed annually in New York City alone."¹ It is good that this is so. A people that reads Paine can never be wholly enslaved.

2. JOHN DICKINSON

Tyler called John Dickinson "able, brilliant, and noble-minded."² But John Adams saw very little in the man. He thought he was no more than "a piddling genius."³ Adams was probably nearer the truth. Dickinson achieved a reputation in his day for cleverness and learning, but he really had little to say. He was one of those men who always see good on both sides of any question. He was for the Colonies and for the Crown. He thought the Revolution would be a good thing, and then, again, he thought it would harm the Americans. He started out in life as an arch conservative, but ended his days as a friend of Jefferson and a staunch republican. He thought France was a fine country, but he could not quite make up his mind as to what to think about its inhabitants. Of the French Revolution he had two opinions: it was a good thing, and it was a bad thing. No wonder the man is chiefly remembered nowadays as the one after whom Dickinson College, at Carlisle, Penn., was named.

Why Tyler devoted so much space to him in his "Literary History of the American Revolution" is easily to be explained. The generally excellent Cornell historian had very little revolutionary blood in him. He was a middle-of-the-roader. The logic of ideas interested him far more than the logic of events. Hence his badly veiled antipathy for such men as James Otis, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Paine; and hence his sympathy with such as Thomas Hutchinson, Joseph Galloway, and John Dickinson. He tried hard enough to be absolutely fair, but his chromosomes were not made for the job.

¹ Best, p. vi.

² "A Literary History of the American Revolution," by Moses Coit Tyler. 2 vols. N. Y. 1897. Vol. II. p. 34.

³ Quoted in "Political Leaders of Provincial Pennsylvania," by Isaac Sharpless. N. Y. 1919. p. 231.

Dickinson was born in Talbot county, Md., on November 8, 1732,¹ but eight years later he moved with his father to Delaware. He studied law in Philadelphia and at the Middle Temple, London, and began to practise his profession in the first city in 1757. He was an immediate success. In 1762 he was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly, where he remained, off and on, till 1776. He was a member of the Stamp Act Congress and of the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1776. He opposed the Declaration of Independence, but once war was declared he joined the American Army, where he served first as an officer, and then, due to some petty quarrel with those higher up, as a private, but he ended his military career as a brigadier-general in the Delaware militia. He was again a member of the Continental Congress in 1779-1780, and Governor of Pennsylvania from 1782 to 1785. He took part in the debates of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and in the discussions of Pennsylvania and Delaware about the ratification of the document. He was an ardent Federalist, and in private conversation favored a limited monarchy.

He wrote many of the state papers of the time, and it was because of this that Tyler fastened on him the wholly unjustified label of "the penman of the Revolution." Otis and Paine deserve the appellation far more than Dickinson, who was out of sympathy with all the radicals, and who was really no more than a sort of second assistant secretary of the Continental Congress and of the Constitutional Convention. He wrote what the Paines and Adamses told him to write. Among the documents which he thus "wrote" are the following: "Resolutions in relation to the Stamp Act" adopted by the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1765; the "Declaration of Rights" and "Petition to the King," adopted by the Stamp Act Congress; the "Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain over the Colonies in America," adopted by the Pennsylvania Convention; the "Address of Congress to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec"; the "Petition of Congress to the King"; the "Declaration by the United Colonies of North America . . . Setting Forth the Causes and Necessity of Their Taking up Arms"; the first draft of the "Articles of Confederation" and the "Address of Congress to the Several States on the Present Situation of Affairs" (November, 1779).

¹ For my biographical facts I rely mainly on "The Life and Times of John Dickinson," by Charles J. Stillé. Phila. 1891.

He also wrote numerous pamphlets and newspaper articles,¹ but the most popular of them all was the series of "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies," which ran in the leading Pennsylvania papers from December 2, 1767, to February 15, 1768. Originally there were twelve of them, but in November, 1773, they were supplemented with "Two Letters on the Tea Tax." The first twelve won instant popularity. They were reprinted in all the Colonies and in England, and were translated into French.

After 1776 Dickinson's popularity waned considerably because of his well-known conservative opinions and his pussyfooting. But a series of anonymous articles by him in 1787-1788, later known as the "Letters of Fabius" did much to swing Pennsylvania and Delaware to ratifying the Federal Constitution. They were the first two States to do so. He died on February 14, 1808, and was buried in Wilmington, Del.

The lawyers of the Middle and Southern Colonies were far better trained than those of New England. "Many of them were from the Inns of Court, where they had steeped themselves in the Common Law and imbibed a profound respect for the orderly processes of English legal procedure."² With the exception of Jefferson, Henry and a few others, they always appealed to the Constitution, never to abstract principles. The New Englanders were poorer lawyers, but far better political scientists.

Dickinson, when he was not pussyfooting, was always the lawyer. In his writings he seldom referred to the political philosophers. His arguments, almost invariably, dealt with abstruse constitutional points. He was so good a lawyer, indeed, that he narrowly escaped being a loyalist.³ He accepted the ministerial theory of parliamentary sovereignty, he sided heartily with the English mercantile view of the economic relations of the Colonies with the mother country, and he loved the King. The one thing that kept him from finally joining the loyalists was the English tax programme. He maintained, by a piece of abstruse legal reasoning, that it violated the constitutional rights of the American property owners. But even about the unconstitutional tax programme he could never get very excited. The heat which it en-

¹ They are all collected in "The Political Writings of John Dickinson." 2 vols. Wilmington, Del. 1801. A much more complete edition is that edited by Paul Leicester Ford, in 2 vols., comprising Vols. XIII and XIV of "The Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania." Phila. 1891 and 1895.

² Parrington. Vol. I. p. 222.

³ "The War of Independence: American Phase," by Claude H. Van Tyne. Boston. 1929. p. 31.

gendered in the New England radicals was beyond his comprehension. He believed that the King and his ministers would straighten everything out in the end. He dreaded a rupture, and never failed to counsel moderation. The following, for example, is from Letter XI of "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies":

Beloved Countrymen,

I rejoice to find, that my two former letters to you, have been generally received with so much favour by such of you whose sentiments I have had an opportunity of knowing. Could you look into my heart, you would instantly perceive an ardent affection for your persons, a zealous attachment to your interests, a lively resentment of every insult and injury offered to your honour or happiness, and an inflexible resolution to assert your rights, to the utmost of my weak power, to be the only motives that have engaged me to address you. I am no further concerned in anything affecting America, than any one of you; and when liberty leaves it, I can quit it much more conveniently than most of you: but while Divine Providence, that gave me existence in a land of freedom, permits my head to think, my lips to speak, and my hand to move, I shall so highly and gratefully value the blessing received, as to take care that my silence and inactivity shall not give my implied assent to any act degrading my brethren and myself from the birthright wherewith heaven itself "*hath made us free.*"

Sorry I am to learn, that there are some few persons, who shake their heads with solemn motion, and pretend to wonder what can be the meaning of these letters. "Great Britain, they say, is too powerful to contend with; she is determined to oppress us; it is in vain to speak of right on one side, when there is power on the other; when we are strong enough to resist, we shall attempt it; but now we are not strong enough, and therefore we had better be quiet; it signifies nothing to convince us that our rights are invaded, when we cannot defend them; and if we should get into riots and tumults about the late act, it will only bring down heavier displeasure upon us."

What can such men design? What do their grave observations amount to, but this — "that these colonies, totally regardless of

until the people are FULLY CONVINCED, that any further submission will be destructive to their happiness.¹

Dickinson himself never was "fully convinced." The ideas of independence and republicanism were repugnant to him, especially the latter. He looked with disfavor upon all democracies and rebellions. The admiration he expressed for the French Revolution² was of the coolest sort. The ideal form of government to him was what he called "a mixed government," as exemplified in the British system.

He was not much as a writer and even less as a thinker. Tyler's judgment upon the "Letters from a Farmer"—that "their importance may perhaps fairly be described as constituting, upon the whole, the most brilliant event in the literary history of the Revolution"³—is absurd. The Revolution succeeded in spite of the "Letters." There was not one new idea in them, not one brilliant epigram, not one powerfully phrased paragraph. The moderation they counseled ran directly counter to the logic of events. Their influence was chiefly to impede the progress of the Revolution, and thus to prolong the international agony. Dr. Parrington has well characterized the man in these words:

Dickinson was in no sense a serious political thinker. He was a cultivated lawyer who defended with skill and grace a ready-made philosophy, unconcerned about the social significance of that philosophy. Scarcely anywhere else in his writings does he show to such poor advantage as in his nine "Letters of Fabius," written in defense of the Constitution during the great debate. There is in them not a single illuminating comment. . . . As an Eighteenth Century gentleman he little understood the spirit of liberalism that was stirring in many minds; he did not sympathize with the turbulent forces that were driving toward a different social order; and in consequence his technical arguments seem today curiously old-fashioned.⁴

¹ P. L. Ford edition of "The Writings of John Dickinson." Vol. XIII. pp. 187-190.

² "The Revolutionary Spirit in America and France," by Bernard Fay. Translated by Ramon Guthrie. N. Y. 1927. p. 374.

³ Tyler. Vol. I. p. 234.

⁴ Parrington. Vol. I. pp. 230-231.

3. OTHER POLITICAL WRITERS

There were few other political writers of importance in Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary period. The pamphlet literature, however, was considerable. Most of it was anonymous. In 1764 there appeared in Philadelphia "An Essay on the Trade of the Northern Colonies of Great Britain in North America." It was a calm plea for a let-up in the British taxation programme. Between June 11 and August 4, 1774, there were published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* six essays, which later in the year appeared in a pamphlet entitled, "A Few Political Reflections Submitted to the Consideration of the British Colonies, by a Citizen of Philadelphia." It, too, was a plea for an abatement of the taxes, but there was added the counsel that all opposition to the Crown had better be confined to lawful protests. In the same year, James Wilson, a prominent Philadelphia lawyer, wrote "Considerations of the nature and Extent of the Legislative authority of the British Parliament." Wilson's chief argument was that the Colonies were subjects of the King alone, and thus were not obliged to heed the laws passed by the House of Parliament. Finally, there was George Duffield, a Presbyterian preacher of Philadelphia. He delivered many a fiery sermon in behalf of separation, and was a favorite of John Adams, who spoke glowingly of him in his letters to his wife, Abigail.

The three chief loyalist writers of Pennsylvania were Provost William Smith of the College of Philadelphia, Joseph Stansbury, and Joseph Galloway. Of these Galloway was by far the most able. Franklin tried hard enough to make him change his mind, but without success. Galloway's most popular writings were the following: "A Candid Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great Britain and the Colonies" (1755); "Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War in the Middle Colonies" (1799); "Cool Thoughts on the Consequences to Great Britain of American Independence" (1780); and "The Claim of American Loyalists Reviewed and Maintained Upon Incontrovertible Principles of Law and Justice" (1788). In the latter year the Pennsylvania Assembly found him guilty of high treason, and confiscated his estates, estimated at more than £40,000.

B. SONGS AND BALLADS OF REVOLUTIONARY
 PENNSYLVANIA

Economically Pennsylvania suffered much less during the Revolution than either Massachusetts or Virginia; also she had fewer book readers, yet she produced more and better ballads and songs than any other British Colony at the time. Paine's "Liberty Tree" has already been referred to in the discussion of him. He wrote many other war poems in the *Pennsylvania Magazine* while he was editor. One of the more popular of these was "The Death of Wolfe, on the plains of Abraham."

A celebrated war song of the time was John Dickinson's "Liberty Song." He sent the first draft of it to James Otis, immediately after the refusal of the Massachusetts Legislature to rescind the Circular Letter of February 11, 1768. Otis liked it very much, and had it published in the *Boston Gazette* for July 18 of that year. Dickinson later revised it. It was reprinted in every important radical paper in the Colonies. Extracts from it follow:

*Come join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
 And rouse bold hearts at fair Liberty's call;
 No tyrannous acts, shall suppress your just claim,
 Or stain with dishonor America's name.
 In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live;
 Our purses are ready,
 Steady, Friends, steady,
 Not as slaves, but as freemen our money we'll give.*

*Our worthy forefathers—let's give them a cheer—
 To climates unknown did courageously steer;
 Thro' oceans to deserts, for freedom they came,
 And, dying, bequeath'd us their freedom and fame.*

. . .

*The Tree, their own hands had to Liberty rear'd,
 They lived to behold growing strong and rever'd;
 With transport then cried,—“Now our wishes we gain,
 For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain.”*

*How sweet are the labors that freemen endure,
That they shall enjoy all the profit, secure,—
No more such sweet labors Americans know,
If Britons shall reap what Americans sow.*

.

*Then join hand in hand brave Americans all,
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;
In so righteous a cause let us hope to succeed,
For Heaven approves of each generous deed.*

*All ages shall speak with amaze and applause,
Of the courage we'll show in support of our laws;
To die we can bear,—but to serve we disdain,
For shame is to freemen more dreadful than pain.*

*This bumper I crown for our sovereign's health,
And this for Britannia's glory and wealth;
That wealth, and that glory immortal may be,
If she is but just, and we are but free.
In freedom we're born, &c.¹*

The author of the following "Pennsylvania Song" is unknown. It appeared originally in 1775 in the Poet's Corner of *Dunlap's Packet* as the "Pennsylvania March, to the tune of the Scot's song, 'I winna marry ony lad, but Sandy o'er the lea.'"

*We are the troops that ne'er will stoop,
To wretched slavery,
Nor shall our seed, by our base deed
Despisèd vassals be;
Freedom we will bequeathe to them,
Or we will bravely die;
Our greatest foe, ere long shall know
How much did Sandwich lie.
And all the world shall know,
Americans are free;
Nor slaves nor cowards we will prove,
Great Britain soon shall see.*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution," edited by Frank Moore. N. Y. 1866. pp. 37-39.

*We'll not give up our birthright,
 Our foes shall find us men;
 As good as they, in any shape,
 The British troop shall ken.
 Huzza! brave boys, we'll beat them
 On any hostile plain;
 For freedom, wives, and children dear,
 The battle we'll maintain.*

*What! can those British tyrants think,
 Our fathers crossed the main,
 And savage foes, and dangers met,
 To be enslav'd by them?
 If so, they are mistaken,
 For we will rather die;
 And since they have become our foes,
 Their forces we defy.
 And all the world shall know,
 Americans are free,
 Nor slaves nor cowards we will prove,
 Great Britain soon shall see.¹*

"The Irishman's Epistle to the Troops in Boston," by "Paddy" was also widely read. It went through four different broadside editions shortly after it was first published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine*. "The New Song" which was first printed in the same magazine in 1776 was occasionally reprinted in other periodicals. It was adapted to the melody, "As Jamie gay blithe gang'd his way."

But the most popular of the Pennsylvania war poems was Francis Hopkinson's "Battle of the Kegs." It was written to commemorate a special occasion. Early in January, 1778, David Bushnell, the inventor of the torpedo, prepared a number of "infernals," and set them floating in the Delaware river, a short distance above Philadelphia, in order to annoy the royal shipping. The "infernals" were made of wooden kegs loaded with powder, and were set to explode when hit by moving ships. On seeing them the British became frightened, and for protection shot at everything they saw floating. Hopkinson com-

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 90-91.

posed the "Battle of the Kegs" upon this incident. It was a favorite of Washington's army. A few of the stanzas:

*Gallants attend, and hear a friend,
Trill forth harmonious ditty,
Strange things I'll tell, which late befell,
In Philadelphia city.*

*'Twas early day, as poets say,
Just when the sun was rising,
A soldier stood, on a log of wood,
And saw a thing surprising.*

*As in amaze he stood to gaze,
The truth can't be denied, sir,
He spied a score of kegs or more,
Come floating down the tide sir.*

*A sailor, too, in jerkin blue,
This strange appearance viewing,
First damn'd his eyes, in great surprise,
Then said, "some mischief's brewing.*

*"The kegs, I'm told, the rebels hold,
Packed up like pickled herring,
And they're come down, t'attack the town,
In this new way of ferrying."*

*The soldier flew, the sailor too,
And scared almost to death, sir,
Wore out their shoes to spread the news,
And ran till out of breath, sir.*

*Now up and down, throughout the town,
Most frantic scenes were acted;
And some ran here, and others there,
Like men almost distracted.*

*The royal band, now ready stand,
All ranged in dread array, sir,
With stomachs stout, to see it out,
And make a bloody day, sir.*

*The cannons roar from shore to shore,
The small arms make a rattle;
Since wars began, I'm sure no man
Ere saw so strange a battle.*

*The rebel dales, the rebel vales,
With rebel trees surrounded,
The distant woods, the hills and floods,
With rebel echoes sounded.*

*The fish below swam to and fro,
Attack'd from every quarter;
Why sure, thought they, the devil's to pay,
'Mongst folks above the water.*

*The kegs, 'tis said, though strongly made
Of rebel staves and hoops, sir,
Could not oppose their powerful foes,
The conquering British troops, sir.*

*From morn till night, these men of might
Display'd amazing courage;
And when the sun was fairly down,
Retir'd to sup their porridge.*

*An hundred men, with each a pen,
Or more, upon my word, sir,
It is most true would be too few,
Their valor to record, sir.*

*Such feats did they perform that day,
Against those wicked kegs, sir,
That years to come, if they get home,
They'll make their boasts and brags, sir.¹*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution," edited by F. Moore. N. Y. 1866. pp. 210-214.

Philip Freneau the poet wrote a number of war ballads, but they were not among his best work, and not so good as any of the aforementioned songs. The most readable of them were "George the Third's Soliloquy," which first appeared in the *United States Magazine* in 1779, and "Invitation to the Refugees," which was printed in a Philadelphia broadside sheet in the same year.

The treason of Benedict Arnold, naturally, evoked a number of violent verses from the radical poetasters, but none of them was of high distinction. The following "address to the vile traitor," which was published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* for October 24, 1780, was representative of the lot:

*Arnold! thy name as heretofore,
Shall now be Benedict no more;
Since, instigated by the devil,
The ways are turn'd from good to evil.*

*'Tis fit we brand thee with a name,
To suit thy infamy and shame;
And since of treason thour't convicted,
Thy name should now be maledicted.*

*Unless by way of contradiction,
We style thee Britain's Benediction;
Such blessings she, with liberal hand,
Confers on this devoted land.*

. . .

*Then in this class of Britain's heroes,
The Tories, savage Indians, Negroes,
Recorded, Arnold's name shall stand,
While Freedom's blessings crown our land,
And odious for the blackest crimes,
Arnold shall stink to the latest times.¹*

¹ "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution," edited by F. Moore. N. Y. 1866. pp. 333-334.

C. THE PROSE AND VERSE OF PENNSYLVANIA IN THE
YEARS 1750-1810*Prose*

I. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Franklin made a relatively small contribution to the American argument during the Revolutionary period. He exerted a powerful influence, but it was "chiefly through the customary channels of diplomacy, and in a voluminous correspondence with friends and public men on both sides of the Atlantic; and his contemporary publications, comparatively few in number, carried weight because of their directness and sturdy common sense, and of the fame of their writer"¹ rather than because of their intrinsic merit. He never knew precisely what all the noise was about, and the philosophical and theological pamphlets of such men as Mayhew, Cooper, Otis, and Lee always left him somewhat puzzled. Indeed, so doubtful was he of the principles involved that more than once he came pretty close to allying himself with the loyalists. But on each occasion luck was with him, and he chose the right side.

He was the first great fixer of American political history, and also, if John Adams is to be believed, its first great trimmer. He made friends of the English, he made friends of the French, he made friends of the Germans, he made friends of the Federalists, he made friends of the Republicans, and when he died the whole civilized world mourned him. Just where he stood on any one of the fundamental issues is still something of a mystery. He trusted the people, and he didn't trust them. He claimed to be a deist, but he contributed to all the churches in his neighborhood, and believed in the transmigration of souls. All his life long he preached a copy-book morality, but he himself was extremely careless in his personal affairs. He spent money lavishly, ate so much that he suffered from gout for years and years, and when he was married at the age of twenty-four brought to his wife, as a wedding present, an illegitimate son.

He wrote a great deal, but it was chiefly to make money, or to forget the pain of his gout. He knew his public well. He made a fortune as a newspaper and a magazine editor, and his "Poor Richard's Alma-

¹ William McDonald in "The Cambridge History of American Literature." N. Y. 1927. Vol. I. p. 132.

nac" was an immediate success: it sold 10,000 copies within the first three months of publication. He did not produce one truly great work of the imagination, and his general style was surely not above the ordinary, but his work achieved an amazing popularity.

All this was probably a colossal misfortune to the United States, for, despite his good fellowship and occasional good sense, Franklin represented the least praiseworthy qualities of the inhabitants of the New World: miserliness, fanatical practicality, and lack of interest in what are usually known as spiritual things. Babbitry was not a new thing in America, but he made a religion of it, and by his tremendous success with it he grafted it upon the American people so securely that the national genius is still suffering from it. He extolled the virtues of honesty, industry, chastity, cleanliness, and temperance—all excellent things. But it never occurred to him that with these alone life is not worth a fool's second thought. Philosophy, poetry, and the arts spring from different sources.

Franklin was born in Boston on January 17, 1706.¹ At the age of ten he was taken from school to assist his father, a tallow chandler and soap-boiler by trade. Three years later he was apprenticed to his older brother James, editor and publisher of the *New England Courant*. He began his career as a writer by slipping under the door of his brother's printing office an anonymous contribution, which was accepted. He was unable to get along with James, so in 1723 he ran away from Boston, first to New York, and then to Philadelphia, where he found work in the printing office of one Samuel Keimer, a Jew. The following year he went to London to get type to open an office of his own, but instead he spent the next two years in drinking and whoring. In 1726 he was penniless, so he returned to Philadelphia, where he opened a shop of his own, in which he did a great deal of the public printing of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. In 1728 he formed the Junto Club for group reading and debating, and for the purpose of helping reform the world.

In 1729 he bought from Keimer the *Universal Instructor in All Arts and Sciences and Pennsylvania Gazette*, which at the time had a subscription list of not more than 90. The paper in time became the

¹ Several good biographies of Franklin have been written. Among them are "Benjamin Franklin," by John T. Morse, Jr. Boston. 1889; "Benjamin Franklin as a Man of Letters," by John Bach McMaster. Boston. 1893; "The Many-Sided Franklin," by Paul Leicester Ford. N. Y. 1899; and "Franklin: The Apostle of Modern Times," by Bernard Faÿ. Translated by Bravim Imbs. Boston. 1929. Of the lot the Faÿ is both the most recent and the best.

leading public print between New York and Charleston. He wrote a number of essays for it, including "A Meditation on a Quart Mug," "Dialogue Between Philocles and Horatio Concerning Virtue and Pleasure," and "A Witch Trial at Mount Holly." About this time he also wrote the pamphlet, "A Modest Inquiry into the Nature and Necessity of Paper Currency." The argument in it was a wholly false one, but it got Franklin the job of printing most of the worthless paper money of Pennsylvania.

In 1732 he began the publication of "Poor Richard's Almanac," which for twenty-five years was one of the most popular publications in the Colonies. Its average annual sale was more than 10,000 copies. In the same year he established in Philadelphia the first circulating library in America. In 1730 he married Deborah Read of Philadelphia. She died in 1774. In 1741 he began the second monthly publication in America, the *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle for All the British Colonies in America*, which died with the sixth number.

Franklin had very little schooling in his youth, but he made up for it by omnivorous reading. While still in his teens he read Plutarch, Bunyan, Defoe, Mather, Locke, Collins, Hume, and Shaftesbury. He early became interested in scientific matters, and kept that interest up till his dying day. Nothing was alien to his experimental mind. He was in the habit of writing about his experiments and general ideas to scientists and philosophers in Europe, and thus he earned the respect of many of them. He in this way became the friend, in England, of Collinson, Priestley, Price, Hume, Adam Smith, Robertson, Lord Kames, Mandeville, Joseph Banks, Bishop Watson, Burke, Chatham, and Lord Shelburne; and in France, of Turgot, Mirabeau, Quesnay, La Rochefoucauld, Lafayette, Vergennes, Condorcet, Buffon, Voltaire, Robespierre, Lavoisier, and D'Alembert. His electrical experiments he used to report in the form of letters to the English physicist, Peter Collinson, who later published all of them in London in 1751 under the title, "Experiments and Observations in Electricity, Made at Philadelphia in America, by Mr. Benjamin Franklin." The following year Franklin showed the identity of lightning and electricity by his famous kite experiment, and he invented the lightning rod at the same time.

He began his active political life in 1736, when he was chosen clerk of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania; he retained the office till 1750. In 1737 he was made postmaster of the Colony. About the

same time he organized a night watch, a fire company, the American Philosophical Society, and a sort of high high-school, which in 1779 became the University of Pennsylvania. In 1751 he helped establish a hospital in Philadelphia. By this time, because of his scientific discoveries, he had an international reputation, and was the foremost individual man in the Colonies. Harvard, Yale, Oxford, and St. Andrews gave him honorary degrees. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and was one of the eight foreign associates of the French Academy of Science. So great was his renown then that Lord Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, said of him: "In one point of view the name of Franklin must be considered as standing higher than any of the others which illustrated the Eighteenth Century. Distinguished as a statesman he was equally great as a philosopher, thus uniting in himself a rare degree of excellence in both these pursuits, to excel in either of which is deemed the highest praise."¹

He was a member of the Colonial Congress held in Albany in 1754, at which he submitted a plan for colonial union. The Congress adopted the plan, but it was rejected by the colonial assemblies. In 1759 he wrote "An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania," and then went to England as a representative of the Province. He returned to America in 1762, and in 1763 traveled in all the Colonies inspecting the postal service in each. He worked mightily against the Stamp Act, but when it was finally passed by Parliament he thought it would be enforced, and he suggested his friend John Hughes as stamp distributor of Pennsylvania. This was a great political blunder, and for the rest of his days it was brought up against him by his enemies. In 1766 he went to England again, and appeared at the bar of the House of Commons to answer questions in regard to the situation in America. In the political discussions at home in the next eight years he contributed several articles to the newspapers, but he was not one of the leaders. His course was too moderate for the extremists in either country. Nobody really knew precisely where he stood, so evasive was he. He kept up this caution even after he signed the Declaration of Independence, and it was largely on account of the lack of definiteness in his political opinions that John Adams, in a letter to his cousin, Samuel Adams, dated December 7, 1778, said of him:

¹ Quoted in "Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin," edited by Frank Woodworth Pine. N. Y. 1925. Price Introduction. p. xi.

He loves his Ease, hates to offend, and seldom gives any opinion till obliged to do it. . . . You know that, although he has as determined a soul as any man, yet it is his constant Policy never to say "yes" or "no" decidedly but when he cannot avoid it.¹

Nevertheless, he managed to win back the confidence of the people at large after the Revolution, and in 1776 he was made president of the Constitutional Convention of Pennsylvania. In the same year he was chosen as envoy to France, where he showed great skill as a negotiator. He was also a great success socially. He was the star attraction in the salons of Mmes. Helvetius and Brillon. He set up a printing press of his own in Passy, and there printed a collection of writings since known as "The Bagatelles." They included "The Ephemera," "The Morals of Chess," "The Whistle," and "The Dialogue Between Franklin and the Gout." They were all written between 1778 and 1785 for the amusement of his friends in Paris. They were not a new literary form for him. In 1773 he published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* two similar things: "An Edict by the King of Prussia" and "Rules by which A Great Empire May Be Reduced to A Small One." Stuart P. Sherman, in a burst of enthusiasm, called them masterpieces of irony, adding that "Swift might have been pleased to sign" them.²

On his return to this country in 1785 he took part in the debates of the Constitutional Convention, but it was hardly a prominent part. Franklin was very good in organizing post offices and fire departments, but he was completely lost when it came to drafting organic bodies of laws. Basic philosophical ideas were beyond him. He did not approve of the new Constitution, but he regarded it as the best obtainable and therefore signed it. His last act was the signing of an anti-slavery petition to Congress as president of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. He died in Philadelphia on April 17, 1790, at the age of eighty-four.

One American critic has said, "Intellectually there are few men who are Franklin's peers in all the ages and nations."³ This opinion must be put down as an amiable exaggeration. Franklin had an excellent mind, but surely he was not a philosopher. Abstract ideas, save

¹ Quoted by Morse. pp. 333-334.

² "Americans," by Stuart P. Sherman. N. Y. 1922. p. 43.

³ Morse. p. 418.

those of the corner grocery store, somehow irked him. He was not an original thinker,¹ but he was one of the best eclectic thinkers who ever lived. He lived in an age of rationalism, and few other men of that time were so imbued with the ideas then afloat. The current French philosophy was in large part precisely to his taste. "In their youth, Voltaire and Franklin had both drunk at the same spring: the English radicalism of Gordon, Collins, and Shaftesbury. But Voltaire had developed it into a witty, dry and sharp-tongued philosophy, while Franklin had expanded it with good fellowship and sentimentality."²

This good fellowship of his explains his strange brand of deism. He was not a believer, but there were many reservations to his unbelief. In Paris he refused to have any priests around him, and this caused much surprise in a land where every diplomat had his private chaplain. He told everybody that he could say his prayers himself. "He considered the Church of Rome to be like raw sugar, the American churches like refined sugar, for they were less influenced by hierarchical systems or mysticism. He saw a certain advantage in the multiplicity of churches in the world, as that made for competition and competition made for trade, but he didn't think churches were of any importance in Heaven."³ He spoke of miracles with levity, but he had some belief in Pythagoreanism. In other words he was pretty much confused about the whole business. His main contribution to the religious question was little more than a good-natured tolerance influenced largely by his shrewd business sense. Nobody but Franklin could have reconciled deism with the practice of contributing money to all the denominations in Philadelphia.

On the few occasions when he tried to be philosophical about religion he made a sorry spectacle, as in the following celebrated letter to Dr. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale. The letter is dated March 9, 1790—a little more than a month before Franklin's death.

You desire to know something of my Religion. It is the first time that I have been questioned upon it. But I do not take your curiosity amiss, & shall endeavor in a few words to gratify it. Here is my Creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe:

¹ Morse indulges in an absurd opinion when he says, p. 419, "He was a profound thinker in morals and on the conduct of life; so that with the exception of the founders of great religions it would be difficult to name any persons who have more extensively influenced the ideas, motives, and habits of life of man."

² Fay. p. 490.

³ *Ibid.* p. 490.

That he governs the World by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we can render to him, is doing good to his other Children. That the Soul of Man is immortal, and will be treated with Justice in another Life, respect^s its Conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental Principles of all sound Religion, and I regard them as you do, in whatever Sect I meet with them. As to *Jesus of Nazareth*, my Opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the *System of Morals & his Religion as he left them to us, the best the World ever saw*; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes; and I have, with most of the present Dissenters in Engld, some Doubts as to his Divinity: tho' it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, hav^e never studied it, & think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an Oppor^t of know^e the Truth with less Trouble. I see no harm however in its being believed, if that Belief has the good Consequence, as probably it has, of mak^e his Doctrines more respected & better observed, esp^r as I do not perceive that the Supreme [Being] takes it amiss, by distinguish^s the Believers, in his Gov^t of the World, with any particular Marks of his Displeasure. I shall only add respect^s myself, that hav^e experienced the Goodness of that Being in conducting me prosperously thro' a long Life, I have no doubt of its Continuance in the next, tho' without the smallest Conceit of meriting such Goodness.¹

Try to imagine Thomas Paine dismissing God and the churches in so flippant a way!

Franklin's most popular work was, and still is, his "Autobiography." It was the longest of his writings, and the one he did most carelessly. He wrote it whenever he felt like it, and apparently cared very little if it was ever published. The greater part of it he composed while he was in England as agent for the United Colonies. Parts of it were printed in France between 1791 and 1798, but the complete "Autobiography" did not appear till 1868 under the editorship of John Bigelow, who copied it from the original MS., which he obtained in France.²

¹ "The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., President of Yale College," edited, under the authority of the Corporation of Yale University, by Franklin Bowditch Dexter. Vol. III. N. Y. 1901. pp. 386-387.

² The Bigelow edition of the complete works of Franklin, in ten volumes, N. Y. 1887-1888, is the best and most authoritative in print. Vol. I contains a critical introduction.

John Bach McMaster the historian has called the book the greatest biographical work of any kind ever written in America, and has compared it to Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" in literary merit.¹ The book is very simply written, and is quite readable. But it is lacking in almost everything else necessary to a really great work of *belles lettres*: grace of expression, charm of personality, and intellectual flight. The essential commonplaceness of the man is in every line of it. He was incapable of dreaming, of doubting, of being mystified. The only mysteries he understood were those that lent themselves easily to experimentation. The mysteries of poetry, of philosophy, and even of religion were beyond him. Doing good, making money, and gaining the approbation of one's fellows were the only things that occupied him when addressing the public. Witness his "Scheme for Aiming at Moral Perfection":

It was about this time I conceiv'd the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wish'd to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. . . .

In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I had met with in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I propos'd to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annex'd to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occur'd to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully express'd the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of virtues, with their precepts were:

1. Temperance.

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2. Silence.

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

¹ McMaster. p. 269.

3. Order.

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. Resolution.

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. Frugality.

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; *i.e.*, waste nothing.

6. Industry.

Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. Sincerity.

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. Justice.

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. Moderation.

Avoid extreams; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. Cleanliness.

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, cloaths, or habitation.

11. Tranquility.

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. Chastity.

Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

13. Humility.

Imitate Jesus or Socrates.¹

¹ Pine edition. pp. 133-134.

Not a word about nobility, not a word about honor, not a word about grandeur of soul, not a word about charity of mind! Carlyle called Franklin the father of all the Yankees. That was a libel against the tribe, for the Yankees have produced Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Emily Dickinson. It would be more accurate to call Franklin the father of all the Kiwanians.

Franklin began his "Poor Richard's Almanac" in December, 1732. It was an imitation of the English "Poor Robin's Almanac." It attained a great popularity at once. "Three editions were sold within the month of its appearance. The average sale for twenty-five years was 10,000 a year. He was sometimes obliged to put it to press in October to get a supply of copies to the remote Colonies by the beginning of the year. It has been translated into nearly if not quite every written language, and several different translations of it have been made into the French and German."¹ The most celebrated number was that for the year 1757, the last Franklin edited. It contained the well-known speech on thrift, called "Father Abraham's Speech at an Auction," which was reprinted many times as "The Way of Wealth." For some time it was used as a text in the French schools, under the title of "La Science du Bonhomme Richard."

As to the purpose of the "Almanac" Franklin says the following:

In 1732 I first publish'd my Almanac, under the name of "Richard Saunders;" it was continu'd by me about twenty-five years, commonly call'd "Poor Richard's Almanac." I endeavour'd to make it both entertaining and useful, and it accordingly came to be in such demand, that I reap'd considerable profit from it, vending annually near ten thousand. And observing that it was generally read, scarce any neighborhood in the province being without it, I consider'd it as a proper vehicle for conveying instruction among the common people, who bought scarcely any other books; I therefore filled all the little spaces that occur'd between the remarkable days in the calendar with proverbial sentences, chiefly such as inculcated industry and frugality, as the means of procuring wealth, and thereby securing virtue; it being more difficult for a man in want, to act always honestly, as, to use here one of those proverbs, "It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright."

¹ Bigelow. Vol. I. p. 442.

These proverbs, which contained the wisdom of many ages and nations, I assembled and form'd into a connected discourse prefix'd to the Almanack of 1757, as the harangue of a wise old man to the people attending an auction. The bringing of these scatter'd councils thus into a focus enabled them to make a greater impression. The piece, being universally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the Continent; reprinted in Britain on a broadside, to be stuck up in houses; two translations were made of it in French, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants. In Pennsylvania, as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought that it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money which was observable for several years after its publication. . . .¹

Bigelow thinks that "Poor Richard" contains "some of the best fun as well as the wisest counsel that ever emanated from Franklin's pen."² That is quite true, but absolutely considered the wisdom is of a low order. It points downward. True enough, it was addressed to the common man, but one does not always have to be a vulgarian when talking to the man in the street. Consider Jesus and Socrates and Confucius and Lao-Tze. Consider Montaigne. Consider even Krylov.

The following are representative epigrams in "Poor Richard":

A word to the wise is enough.

God helps them that help themselves.

Sloth, like rust, consumes faster than labor wears, while the used key is always bright, as Poor Richard says. But dost thou love life, then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of, as Poor Richard says.

The sleeping fox catches no poultry.

Lost time is never found again, and what we call time enough always proves little enough.

Sloth makes all things difficult, but industry all things easy.

He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night.

¹ Pine edition of the "Autobiography," pp. 169-170.

² Bigelow edition of Franklin's works. Vol. I. p. 442.

Laziness travels so slowly that Poverty soon overtakes him.

Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.

He that hath a trade hath an estate, and he that hath a calling hath an office of profit and honor.

At the working man's house hunger looks in but dares not enter.

Industry pays debts, while despair increaseth them.

Diligence is the mother of good luck, and God gives all things to industry. Then plough deep while sluggards sleep, and you shall have corn to sell and to keep.

One today is worth two tomorrows.

The cat in gloves catches no mice.

Women and wine, game and deceit,

Make the wealth small and the want great.

What maintains one vice would bring up two children.

Fools make feasts, and wise men eat them.

If you would know the value of money, go and borrow some; for he that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing.

The proof of gold is fire; the proof of a woman, gold; the proof of a man, a woman.

Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead.

Opportunity is the great bawd.

Fish and visitors smell in three days.¹

Of "The Bagatelles," which Franklin wrote while he was in France, little more can be said than for "Poor Richard." Even after more than ten years of Parisian salon life he could not forget his twopenny philosophy. Mme. Brillon fell in love with him, and carried on a long correspondence with him, some of which he published on his private press in Passy. How did Franklin repay her for her eager caresses and elegant dinners? He wrote her a little story, entitled "The Whistle," the moral of which was that one must always be careful not to spend too much money on trifles! She had sent him a description of what she would like to find in Paradise, and Franklin answered thus:

¹ Bigelow edition of Franklin's works. Vol. I. p. 441 ff.

I am charmed with your description of Paradise, and with your plan of living there; and I approve much of your conclusion, that, in the mean time, we should draw all the good we can from this world. In my opinion, we might all draw more good from it than we do, and suffer less evil, if we would take care not to give too much for *whistles*. For to me it seems, that most of the unhappy people we meet with, are become so by neglect of that caution.

You ask what I mean? You love stories, and will excuse my telling one of myself.

When I was a child of seven years old, my friends, on a holiday, filled my pockets with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children; and, being charmed with the sound of a *whistle*, that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I voluntarily offered and gave all my money for one. I then came home, and went whistling all over the house, much pleased with my *whistle*, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, and sisters, and cousins, understanding the bargain I had made, told me I had given four times as much for it as it was worth; put me in mind of what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation; and the reflection gave me more chagrin than the *whistle* gave me pleasure.

This however was afterwards of use to me, the impression continuing in my mind; so that often, when I was tempted to buy some unnecessary thing, I said to myself, *Don't give too much for the whistle*; and I saved my money.¹

Franklin perpetrated one more piece of literature that has somehow escaped the literary historians, but that surely deserves mention. That was his proposed new version of the Bible. Like the immortal authors of the Bay Psalm Book he did not like the King James version. He said:

It is now more than one hundred and seventy years since the translation of our common English Bible. The language in that time is much changed, and the style being obsolete, and thence less agreeable, is perhaps one reason why the reading of that excellent book is of late so much neglected. I have therefore thought it well to

¹ The whole letter appears in Bigelow. Vol. VI. pp. 239-241.

procure a new version in which, preserving the sense, the turn of phrase and manner of expression should be modern. I do not pretend to have the necessary abilities for such a work myself; I throw out the hint for the consideration of the learned.¹

The following was his idea of how the first chapter of Job should read:

Verse 6. *King James version*.—Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also amongst them.

Verse 6: *New version by Franklin*.—And it being levee day in heaven, all God's nobility came to court, to present themselves before him; and Satan also appeared in the circle, as one of the ministry.

Verse 7. *King James version*.—And the Lord said unto Satan: Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said: From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Verse 7. *New version by Franklin*.—And God said to Satan: you have been some time absent; where were you? And Satan answered: I have been at my country-seat, and in different places visiting my friends.

Verse 8. *King James version*.—And the Lord said unto Satan: Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Verse 8. *New version by Franklin*.—And God said: Well, what do you think of Lord Job? You see he is my best friend, a perfectly honest man, full of respect for me, and avoiding everything that might offend me.

Verse 9. *King James version*.—Then Satan answered the Lord, and said: Doth Job fear God for naught?

Verse 9. *New version by Franklin*.—And Satan answered: Does your Majesty imagine that his good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?

Verse 10. *King James version*.—Hast thou not made an hedge about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?

¹ Bigelow edition of Franklin's works. Vol. VI. p. 286.

Thou has blest the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

Verse 10. *New version by Franklin.*—Have you not protected him, and heaped your benefits upon him, till he is grown enormously rich?

Verse 11. *King James version.*—But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

Verse 11. *New version by Franklin.*—Try him; only withdraw your favor, turn him out of his places, and withhold his pensions, and you will soon find him in the opposition.¹

This crime against beautiful letters was in perfect keeping with Franklin's general character. He had a cheap and shabby soul, and the upper levels of the mind were far beyond his reach. His one attempt at dignified philosophical speculation, "Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity" (1725), was so bad that even he was later ashamed of it. As for his scientific experiments, they have been vastly overrated. "All that he invented was current supposition at the time; his work was rather in confirming and defining the scientific notions of others."²

His writings enjoyed a vast popularity in his own day, and still do in ours, but that should not blind us to their inferior quality. All he had to say he borrowed from others, and what is worse, he was a bad borrower. The literature of England in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries was the most glorious in its entire history. There was the immortal King James version of the Bible, and there was the galaxy of stars beginning with Shakespeare and ending with Pope. Franklin read them all, but when he came to imitate and to borrow did he choose any of these? He rejected the entire lot, and instead picked "Poor Robin's Almanac"! And of the King James version his chief comment was that its style was "obsolete"!

To call Franklin "one of the greatest masters of English expression"³ is the veriest nonsense. Almost any one of the Eighteenth Century New England theologians wrote better. Franklin, to be sure, was easier to understand, but there was far less in him worth under-

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 286-287.

² Faÿ. p. 513.

³ Bigelow. Vol. I. p. vii.

standing. His influence on the national letters, in the long run, was probably nil. "He founded no school of literature. He gave no impetus to letters. He put his name to no great work of history, of poetry, of fiction."¹

But by his international prominence and by the wide circulation of his two-penny philosophy he left a lasting impression on the national culture. In him "the 'lowbrow' point of view for the first time took definite shape, stayed itself with axioms, and found a sanction in the idea of 'policy.'"² Thrift, industry, and determination were essential virtues in the building of the nation, but they were not, then or at any other time in history, of sufficient human dignity to build a life philosophy on. Franklin did precisely that for his private life, and by the force of his personality did more than any other man in his day to graft it upon the American people. The vulgarity he spread is still with us.

2. HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECŒUR

From about 1770 to 1815 Philadelphia, as has been said, was the cultural centre of the New World, and thus attracted most of the more enlightened immigrants from abroad. New York was not yet an important town, and Boston suffered heavily during the war, and was under a cloud for many years thereafter. The reputation of Franklin, of course, helped greatly to draw immigrants, and so did the liberalism of the colonial government and the richness of the soil within its borders.

Perhaps the most interesting of the Europeans who settled in Pennsylvania about this time was Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. He was born in Normandy on January 13, 1735.³ He came to America in 1754, and spent between eight and nine years in Pennsylvania, mostly in Philadelphia. In 1764 he moved to Orange county, N. Y., where he

¹ McMaster. p. 272.

² "America's Coming of Age," by Van Wyck Brooks. N. Y. 1915. pp. 13-14.

³ Very little is known about him. Almost the entire literature about him consists of the following writings: "St. Jean de Crèvecoeur," by Julia Post Mitchell. The Columbia University Press. 1916; "Hector St. John: An Old Evasive Planter," by Frank B. Sanborn. The *Massachusetts Magazine*. Salem, Mass. October, 1916. Vol. IX. No. 4; the Ludwig Lewisohn introduction to "Letters from an American Farmer," by J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. Reprinted from the original edition. With a prefatory note by W. P. Trent. N. Y. 1925; and "The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America," by Bernard Faÿ. Translated by Ramon Guthrie. N. Y. 1927. p. 234 ff.

bought a farm of 120 acres. He married an American girl, one Mahetable Tiffet, and had three children by her. In 1780 he took the MS. of his "Letters from an American Farmer" to England, where it was published two years later. It went through two editions in one year. He then translated the book into French, and published it in Paris in 1784. It was as big a success in translation as in the original. The first American edition was published in Philadelphia in 1793, and was very popular. In 1783 he returned to America as consul to New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, to find his wife dead and his three children in the custody of a friend in Boston. He returned to France in 1790. In 1801 he published in Paris "Voyage Dans La Haute Pennsylvanie, Et Dans L'État de New York, par un Membre adoptif de la nation Onéida. Traduit et publiée par l'auteur des Lettres D'Un Cultivatuer Américain." Crèveœur, of course, merely pretended that he translated the book. It was a three volume work, and dealt mainly with the American Indians. There is little in it of value. It was never reprinted. He died on November 12, 1813.

Crèveœur's only claim to our attention is his "Letters from an American Farmer." The picture of the American which it presented was the one accepted by Europe for nearly a half century after its publication. Hazlitt praised it highly in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1829, and so did Charles Lamb and other English critics. The French were especially interested in the book, since they thought it gave an excellent portrait of human life in what they considered was at the time the nearest approximation to Rousseau's "state of nature." The work thus formed part of a great literary movement, "of which the masterpieces are Rousseau's 'Confessions,' St. Pierre's 'Paul et Virginie,' Goethe's 'Sorrows of Werther,' and Chateaubriand's 'Les Natchez.'"¹ It inspired a new, if ephemeral, type of drama and verse in France, such as Gorgy's "Les Torts apparents" and L. Boudin's "Le Voyage d'Amérique."² In this country Washington and Jefferson spoke very highly of the "Letters."

Crèveœur traveled widely in the Colonies, and thought he found in them a very close approach to "a state of nature": simple, virtuous living and high thinking. Indomitable romantic that he was, he was so entranced by the rustic life about him that when he came to write about it in his "Letters" he mixed imagination and fact with utter

¹ Lewisohn introduction, p. xvi. On this general point see also "French Criticism of American Literature Before 1850," by Harold Elmer Mantz. The Columbia University Press. 1912. pp. 1-3.

² Fay. p. 235.

recklessness. His book thus made "delightful literature but fanciful sociology."¹

The full title of the first edition was "Letters From An American Farmer; Describing Certain Provincial Situations, Manners, and Customs, Not Generally Known; And Conveying Some Idea of The Late and Present Interior Circumstances of the *British Colonies* in *North America*. Written for the Information of a Friend in England. By J. Hector St. John, A Farmer in Pennsylvania." There are twelve letters. Crèvecoeur begins with a discussion of "the situation, feelings, and pleasures of an American Farmer," in which he deals *con amore* with the rustic, solitary existence of the average colonial American, stressing what he thought was an amazing display of brotherly love. He then attempts to answer the question, "What is an American?", after which he gives an elaborate description of the local manners and customs, of the ways of American snakes and humming birds, and of "the distresses of a Frontieman." He has much to say about Summer in the New World forests, about the superlative devotion of the African slaves, about the cruelties of the English toward the Indians and the colonists, and about the beauty of the Quaker character. His "facts" are generally fictitious, but they are so feverishly put that one can easily imagine why the Englishmen and Frenchmen of the time, imbued as they were with rationalism and romanticism, were so ready to believe them. Here, for example, is his picture of the colonial American :

I wish I could be acquainted with the feelings and thoughts which must agitate the heart and present themselves to the mind of an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent. He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled; he must necessarily feel a share of national pride, when he views the chain of settlements which embellishes these extended shores. . . . Here he beholds fair cities, substantial villages, extensive fields, an immense country filled with decent houses, good roads, orchards, meadows, and bridges, where an hundred years ago all was wild, wooly and uncultivated! What a train of pleasing ideas this fair spectacle must suggest; it is a prospect which must inspire a good citizen with the most heartfelt pleasure. The difficulty consists in the man-

¹ Lewisohn introduction. p. xx.

ner of viewing so extensive a scene. He is arrived on a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he has hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess every thing, and of a herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion, no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe. Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida. We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory, communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild governments, all respecting the laws, without dreading their power, because they are equitable. We are all animated with the spirit of an industry which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself. . . . A pleasing uniformity of decent competence appears throughout our habitations. The meanest of our log-houses is a dry and comfortable habitation. Lawyer or merchant are the fairest titles our towns afford; that of a farmer is the only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country. It must take some time ere he can reconcile himself to our dictionary, which is but short in words of dignity, and names of honour. There, on a Sunday, he sees a congregation of respectable farmers and their wives, all clad in neat homespun, well mounted, or riding in their own humble waggons. There is not among them an esquire, saving the unlettered magistrate. There he sees a parson as simple as his flock, a farmer who does not riot on the labour of others. We have no princes for whom we toil, starve, and bleed: we are the most perfect society now existing in the world. Here man is free as he ought to be; nor is this pleasing quality so transitory as many others are. . . .

What then is the American, this new man? He is either an European, or the descendant of an European, hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. . . . *He* is an American, who leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad

lap of our great *Alma Mater*. Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigour, and industry which began long since in the east; they will finish that great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit. The American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein either he or his forbears were born. Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labour; his labour is founded on the basis of nature, *self-interest*; can it want a stronger allurements? Wives and children, who before in vain demanded of him a morsel of bread, now, fat and frolicsome, gladly help their father to clear those fields whence exuberant crops are to arise to feed and clothe them all; without any part being claimed, either by a despotic prince, a rich abbot, or a mighty lord. Here religion demands but little of him; a small voluntary salary to the minister, and gratitude to God; can he refuse these? The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labour, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence. — This is an American.¹

Needless to say, no such American ever existed, but the ideal thus set probably had a far greater influence, both at home and abroad, than some think. On this side of the Atlantic it helped give form to the vague aspirations of the struggling farmers and mechanics, and on the other side it left an impression of America as a land of promise, which died only with the aftermath of the World War.

¹ Lewisohn edition of "Letters from a Farmer." pp. 48-56.

3. HUGH HENRY BRACKENRIDGE—THE BEGINNINGS
OF THE AMERICAN NOVEL

The first hundred and seventy-five years of American literary history are strewn with a mass of religious and historical writings, verse, and a few attempts at drama, but very little in the way of the novel. England was then glorying in such masters as Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, but Colonial America knew them not. It produced no novelist of any respectability, and indeed had almost no interest in the art. The reason for this neglect of a prevailing literary fashion is readily ascertainable. The South can be disposed of easily. Until nearly the end of the Eighteenth Century its population was composed principally of lazy country gentlemen and peasants, both of them mainly illiterate. As for New England and large portions of the Middle Colonies, the dominant Puritanical spirit was in direct conflict with novel reading or writing. Timothy Dwight, president of Yale from 1795 to 1817, expressed the prevailing sentiment thus:

Between the Bible and novels there is a gulf fixed which few novel readers are willing to pass. The consciousness of virtue, the dignified pleasure of having performed one's duty, the serene remembrance of a useful life, the hope of an interest in the Redeemer, and the promise of a glorious inheritance in the favor of God are never found in novels.¹

Hence the unanimously moral tone of the few novels that were written on these shores prior to the days of Brackenridge and Charles Brockden Brown. The works of Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Rowson, and Mrs. Wells, as was pointed out on previous pages, are mainly sermons in fiction form addressed to virgins, drunkards, and wife-beaters. Their relationship to American life was of the most superficial. As Dr. Loshe, author of the best study of the early American novel, has said of them: "The injured maidens, the hapless orphans, and fair fugitives, of most of our early fiction might have lived in Timbuctoo as appropriately as in New York."²

With the Revolution there came a decided change in the general

¹ "Travels in New England and New York," by Timothy Dwight. London. 1823. Vol. I. p. 477.

² "The Early American Novel," by Lillie Deming Loshe. N. Y. 1907. p. 50.

attitude toward novels. "When the confusion of war had had time to subside, thoughtful people, gazing with a pardonable complacency on what they had already accomplished, decided that thereafter manners and letters as well as laws, should be home-made."¹ And with political emancipation came also emancipation from the clutches of Puritanism. Royall Tyler stated the change vividly in his preface to his novel, "The Algerine Captive," published in 1797.

One of the first observations the author of the following sheets made upon his return to his native country, after an absence of seven years, was the extreme avidity with which books of mere amusement were purchased by his countrymen. When he left New England, books of biography, travels, and modern romances were confined to our seaports; or if known in the country were read only in the families of clergymen, physicians, and lawyers; while certain funeral discourses, the last words and dying speeches of Bryan Shaheen and Levi Ames, and some dreary somebody's day of Doom [What blasphemy against Michael Wigglesworth's *magnum opus*, that darling of the early Puritans!] formed the most diverting parts of the farmer's library. [Now there are] modern novels and novels almost as incredible. . . . The worthy farmer no longer fatigues himself with Bunyan's Pilgrims up the hill of difficulty, . . . but quaffs wine with Brydone's in the hermitage of Vesuvius, or sports with Bruce in the fairy land of Abyssinia.

Hugh Henry Brackenridge was the first American novelist to give expression to the new spirit. His books, however mediocre as works of art, at least dealt with the American scene, and there was a maturity about them that was wholly lacking in the sentimental-moralistic fiction that went before. He was born near Campbleton, in Scotland, in 1748, and was brought to this country at the age of five.² His father settled in York county, Pa., and though very poor managed to put his son through the county school. A local clergyman took an interest in him and taught him Greek and Latin. Young Hugh Henry

¹ "The Early American Novel," by Lillie Deming Loshe. N. Y. 1907. p. 2.

² For my biographical information I rely on the unsigned biographical sketch appended to "Adventures of Major O'Regan, by H. H. Brackenridge. Author of Adventures of Captain Farago. With a Biographical Notice of the Author, and Illustrations from Original Designs by Darey." Phila. 1856. The biographical notice occupies pages 151-189.

was a brilliant pupil, and at fifteen he was made a teacher in the free school on the Gunpowder Falls, Md. At eighteen he went to Princeton. He was a classmate of Freneau, and collaborated with him on a joint commencement oration in verse, entitled "The Rising Glory of America." "He confessed that on his part it was a task of labor, while the verse of his associate flowed spontaneously."¹ He studied divinity for a while, and though never ordained, was licensed to preach. His reputation for scholarship spread, and soon he was made head of a fashionable academy on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. For a while he dabbled in verse, but was a failure at it, even in his own eyes. The only poem of his that is at all remembered now is the one he wrote about the Battle of Bunker Hill shortly after the event. For a time he edited the *United States Magazine*, a political periodical.

In 1777 he joined the American Army as chaplain. At the end of the Revolution he studied law, and before many years were gone he was at the head of the bar of Western Pennsylvania. He grew rich, married, and was elected to the State Legislature. In the debates regarding the ratification of the Federal Constitution he sided with the Federalists. He took the part of the "whiskey boys" in the Whiskey Insurrection of 1794 in his State, and for a time lost somewhat in public favor. But he was soon back in public esteem, and in 1800 was appointed judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, which post he held till his death in 1816.

Like so many other public men of his time he did considerable scribbling. He wrote several burlesque poems on duelling and on political topics, a number of sermons, and what he called a "Masque," in praise of the warm springs of Virginia. He collected them all in a volume called "The Gazette Publications." In 1795 he wrote "Incidents of the Western Insurrection" in defense of his activities in it. The next year he published the first part of his most important work, a novel entitled, "Modern Chivalry; or the Adventures of Captain John Farrago and Teague O'Regan his Servant." The other three parts followed shortly thereafter. The book was very popular, and a four volume edition of it was issued in Philadelphia, apparently with success, as late as 1851.

The story is frankly modeled after Cervantes' "Don Quixote." Captain Farrago is the eccentric who lives in a dream world popu-

¹ *Ibid.* p. 153.

lated by phantoms, and Teague O'Regan is his Sancho, an ignorant, blustering, foolish, cunning Irishman, who is always getting into trouble, thus affording Farrago opportunities for satirical moralizings. The book unquestionably, as Dr. Loshe says, "displays more ability than any other American tales before those of Charles Brockden Brown,"¹ but it is surely not "a profound philosophical and political work,"² as another critic has said. There is considerable clear and vigorous writing in it, and its general tone is far more civilized than that of, say, Mrs. Rowson's "Charlotte Temple." Thus it marked an advance in the history of American fiction. But the thing as a whole leaves much to be desired. It is very badly constructed, and is frequently very dull. Breckenridge claimed to be an admirer of Hume, Fielding, and Swift, especially Swift, and he frankly set out to imitate their prose, but he did not have the breadth of view, their learning, their incisiveness of thought. He said what he had to say in fairly acceptable language, but it was not a great deal that he had to say. The following is a sample of his best:

On reflection, it seemed advisable to the Captain to write an answer to the card which Colonel or Major Jacko, or whatever his title may have been, had sent him this morning. It was as follows:

Sir,

I have two objections to this duel matter. The one is, lest I should hurt you; and the other is, lest you should hurt me. I do not see any good it would do me to put a bullet through any part of your body. I could make no use of you when dead, for any culinary purpose, as I would do a rabbit or a turkey. I am no cannibal to feed on the flesh of men. Why then shoot down a human creature, of which I would make no use? A buffaloe would be better meat. For though your flesh might be delicate and tender; yet it wants that firmness and consistency which takes and retains salt. At any rate it would not be fit for long sea voyages. You might make a good barbecue, it is true, being of the nature of a racoon or an opossum; but people are not in the habit of barbecuing any thing human now. As to your hide, it is not worth the taking off, being little better than that of a year old colt.

¹ Loshe. p. 22.

² The unsigned biographical sketch. p. 187.

It would seem to me a strange thing to shoot at a man that would stand still to be shot at; in as much as I have been used to shoot at things flying, or running, or jumping. Were you on a tree, now, like a squirrel, endeavoring to hide yourself in the branches, or like a racoon, that after much eying and spying I observe at length in the crotch of a tall oak, with boughs and leaves intervening, so that I could just get a sight of his hinder parts, I should think it pleasurable enough to take a shot at you. But as it is, there is no skill or judgment requisite either to discover or take you down.

As to myself, I do not much like to stand in the way of any thing that is harmful. I am under apprehensions you might hit me. That being the case, I think it most advisable to stay at a distance. If you want to try your pistols, take some object, a tree or a barn door about my dimensions. If you hit that, send me word, and I shall acknowledge that if I had been in the same place, you might also have hit me.

J. F.¹

This is readable stuff, but there are not many instances of it. Most of the book is no more humorous than Benjamin Franklin's *Almanac*. It is very tiresome, on the whole, especially the second part of it, which deals with the political and social problems of a model community founded by the captain.² The anonymous author of the preface to the second Philadelphia edition of "*Modern Chivalry*" went beyond all reason when he said of it: "We do not hesitate to say, that the time will come when it will be placed among the master-pieces of human genius."²

4. CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

Charles Brockden Brown has been called "the first American novelist," "the father of American fiction," and "the first American man of letters." He was none of these. There were novelists before him who were just as gifted. Dr. Loshe, the generally able historian of early American fiction, admits all this; nevertheless she thinks he

¹ Second edition of "*Modern Chivalry*." Phila. 1851. Vol. I. pp. 127-128.

² *Ibid.* p. xii.

introduced "new ideals of literature and life"¹ into American letters. But this too is not founded on fact. The only new ideal of literature that Brown introduced was the mystery, and that is hardly a good reason for calling him "the father of American fiction." Brown's chief claim to our attention does not lie in what he did, but rather in the preposterous importance which the older literary historians have attached to him. At bottom he was of no more significance, from the point of view of intrinsic merit or of influence, than Hugh Henry Brackenridge.

He was born of Quaker parents in Philadelphia on January 17, 1771.² He was early interested in architecture and in all other things calling for delicate organization. He read a great deal of Godwin's and Mary Wollstonecraft's works, and through them became deeply interested in such things as woman's rights and the building of Utopias. His juvenile romance, "Carsol," published after his death, depicts an imaginary community, and is taffy Godwin in both treatment and content. He studied law for a while, and then gave it up. His first published book was "The Dialogue of Alcuin" (1797), a discussion of woman's rights in dialogue form. It is worthless from every point of view. His first novel to be actually published was "Wieland; or the Transformation" (1798). In the next three years he published no less than five other novels: "Ormond; or, the Secret Witness" (1799); "Arthur Merwyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793" (1799-1800); "Edgar Huntley; or, Memoirs of a Sleep Walker" (1799); "Clara Howard, in A Series of Letters" (1801); and "Jane Talbot" (1801). "Wieland," "Ormond," and "Edgar Huntley" are mystery stories, full of blood and thunder. "Arthur Merwyn" contains a description of the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1793. "Edgar Huntley" is also a mystery story, but it is chiefly of interest because it anticipates Cooper in the introduction of the Indian into American fiction. There is also good color in it. "Ormond," also a mystery novel, is now remembered mainly because it contained one character, Constantia Dudley, which Shelley admired greatly. "Clara Howard" and "Jane Talbot" dealt with every-day

¹ "The Early American Novel," by Lillie Deming Loshe. N. Y. 1907. p. 29.

² For my biographical material I rely on "The Life of Charles Brockden Brown: together with Selections from the Rarest of his Printed Works, from his Original Letters, and from his Manuscripts before Unpublished," by William Dunlap. 2 vols. Phila. 1815; and "Brockden Brown and the Novel," by Warren Barton Blake. *The Sewanee Review*. Vol. XVIII. October, 1910. The Dunlap book is very garrulous and badly written, but there are facts in it not to be obtained elsewhere.

life; both of them were failures, and deservedly so. The poor reception they got discouraged Brown so much that he gave up fiction altogether and devoted the rest of his days to magazine editing. In 1799–1801 he edited the *Monthly Magazine and American Review*; in 1803–1807 he edited the *Literary Magazine and American Register*; and in 1807–1810 he edited the *American Register, or, General Repository of History, Politics, and Science*. All of the magazines were published in Philadelphia.

He also wrote a number of political pamphlets and a biography of his brother-in-law, the poet John Blair Linn, made a translation of Volney, and compiled a "system of geography." In 1809 he was elected honorary member of the New York Historical Society, then considered a high honor, since it included on its roll of members such notables as Noah Webster, Timothy Dwight, Josiah Quincy, and George Clinton. He died of tuberculosis on February 22, 1810. In England he was well known for nearly a quarter of a century after his death. John Neal praised him highly in *Blackwood's* for October, 1824; and Scott and even Godwin, Brown's spiritual father, confessed to borrowing from him. But all this renown could not keep his novels alive for long after his death. As Carl Van Doren has said, "The fame of his novels . . . became a legend, but new editions were not called for."¹ The last time his books were printed was in 1827.

Brown's novels, like his political tracts, lean heavily on Godwin. Nearly all of them are tenth-rate "Caleb Williamses." They are all laid in New York, and they all deal with the terrible and the weird. In "Wieland" the directing forces are ventriloquism and spontaneous combustion; in "Arthur Merwyn" they are the horrors of yellow fever; and in "Edgar Huntley" it is somnambulism that carries the edict of Fate. Otherwise the novels are pretty much alike. The story of one of them is basically the story of all of them. In "Wieland" the narrator is Clara Wieland, the chief character, an educated and very independent young woman. The scene of the action is the banks of the Schuylkill. Clara starts off by announcing to the world that "no human being can furnish a parallel" to her misery. She then describes her palatial home and the members of her family, who spend most of their time loafing or "bandying quotations and syllogisms."

"One fine day" there comes a mysterious stranger, one Carwin, a friend of Papa Wieland's brother-in-law, and Clara's lover, Pleyell.

¹ "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I. p. 234.

Clara, of course, instantly falls in love with Carwin. Then, for no good reason that the author gives, mysterious voices begin to float about the Wieland homestead, warning Clara to beware of impending trouble. She hears these voices for several nights in succession, and on one of them she is so terrified that she flees her bed-room, and collapses on her brother's doorstep. The voices then get hold of Pleyell, and tell him, in the most intimate manner, of Clara's spiritual faithlessness to him. Outraged, he flees to Germany, there to assuage his grief. No sooner has he left the Wieland household than dire calamity falls upon it. Clara's brother goes insane and kills his wife and all his children. Needless to say, the mysterious voices commanded him to do this. Clara goes off to another city to recuperate, and on her return she meets Carwin, who confesses that he is a ventriloquist, and that he is the author of the mysterious voices. All of a sudden Clara's insane brother, just escaped from the asylum, appears on the scene, and attempts to kill her. Carwin, with his powers of ventriloquism, dissuades him. Brother Wieland is so ashamed at the rebuke that he instantly becomes normal again, and to prove it to all present he stabs himself. Clara is torn between her grief for her brother and her amazement at Carwin's supernatural gifts. But somehow she cannot take to the master mind, and she finally solves all her troubles by becoming the wife of Pleyell, whom she loves "as a woman should."

Brown, obviously, was greatly influenced by the Gothic novel which began with Horace Walpole's "The Castle of Otranto," and later on had among its star practitioners William Godwin and Mrs. Anne Radcliffe. In England it died with the Eighteenth Century, but in the United States, as usual with imported literary idiocies, it lived on a bit longer, to 1810, the year of Brown's death, to be precise. The English makers of Gothic fiction at least knew their business. Their books are well organized, and occasionally portray a real character. Brown's books are badly organized, and are completely devoid of real men and women. They lack even continuity of plot. Things happen in them without the slightest logical reason. Their one virtue is that while their characters are not real, their settings are. He was not always successful in giving the color of the locale of his stories either, but in "Arthur Merwyn; or, Memoirs of the Year 1793" he achieved a highly realistic description of the yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia in 1798. It is Brown's one really good "horror" job, and is not only the single thing he did worthy of remembrance today, but is

probably also the high water mark of the entire Gothic school. It follows:

In proportion as I drew near the city, the tokens of its calamitous condition became more apparent. Every farmhouse was filled with supernumerary tenants, fugitives from home, and haunting the skirts of the road eager to detain every passenger with inquiries after news. The passengers were numerous; for the tide of emigration was by no means exhausted. Some were on foot, bearing in their countenances the tokens of their recent terror, and filled with mournful reflections on the forlornness of their state. Few had secured to themselves an asylum; some were without the means of paying for victuals or lodging for the coming night; others, who were thus destitute, yet knew not whither to apply for entertainment, every house being already overstocked with inhabitants, or barring its inhospitable doors at their approach.

Families of weeping mothers and dismayed children, attended with a few pieces of indispensable furniture, were carried in vehicles of every form. The parent or husband had perished; and the price of some movable, or the pittance handed forth by public charity, had been expended to purchase the means of retiring from this theatre of disasters, though uncertain and hopeless of accommodation in the neighboring districts.

Between these and the fugitives whom curiosity had led to the road, dialogues frequently took place, to which I was suffered to listen. From every mouth the tale of sorrow was repeated with new aggravations. Pictures of their own distress, or of that of their neighbors, were exhibited in all the hues which imagination can annex to pestilence and poverty.

My preconceptions of the evil now appeared to have fallen short of the truth. The dangers into which I was rushing seemed more numerous and imminent than I had previously imagined. I wavered not in my purpose. A panic crept to my heart, which more vehement exertions were necessary to subdue or control; but I harbored not a momentary doubt that the course which I had taken was prescribed by duty. There was no difficulty or reluctance in proceeding. All for which my efforts were demanded was to walk in this path with tumult or alarm.

Various circumstances had hindered me from setting out upon

this journey as early as was proper. My frequent pauses to listen to the narratives of travellers contributed likewise to procrastination. The sun had nearly set before I reached the precincts of the city. I pursued the track which I had formerly taken, and entered High Street after nightfall. Instead of equipages and a throng of passengers, the voice of levity and glee, which I had formerly observed, and which the mildness of the season would at other times have produced, I found nothing but a dreary solitude.

The market-place, and each side of this magnificent avenue, were illuminated, as before, by lamps; but between the verge of Schuylkill and the heart of the city, I met not more than a dozen figures, and these were ghost-like, wrapped in cloaks, from behind which they cast upon me glances of wonder and suspicion, and, as I approached, changed their course, to avoid touching me. Their clothes were sprinkled with vinegar, and their nostrils defended from contagion by some powerful perfume.

I cast a look upon the houses, which I recollected to have formerly been at this hour brilliant with lights, resounding with lively voices, and thronged with busy faces. Now they were closed, above and below, dark, and without tokens of being inhabited. From the upper windows of some, a gleam sometimes fell upon the pavement I was traversing, and showed that their tenants were not fled, but were secluded or disabled.

The evening had now advanced, and it behooved me to procure accommodation at some of the inns. These were easily distinguished by their *signs*; but many were without inhabitants. At length I lighted upon one, the hall of which was open and the windows lifted. After knocking for some time, a young girl appeared, with many marks of distress. In answer to my question, she answered that both her parents were sick, and that they could receive no one. I inquired in vain for any other tavern at which strangers might be accommodated. She knew of none such; and left me, on some one's calling to her from above, in the midst of my embarrassment. After a moment's pause, I returned discomfited and perplexed to the street.

I proceeded, in a considerable degree, at random. At length I reached a spacious building in Fourth street, which the signpost showed me to be an inn. I knocked loudly and often at the door. At length a female opened the window of the second story, and,

in a tone of peevishness, demanded what I wanted. I told her that I wanted lodging.

"Go, hunt for it somewhere else," said she, "you'll find none here." I began to expostulate; but she shut the window with quickness, and left me to my own reflections.

I began now to feel some regret at the journey I had taken. Never, in the depth of caverns or forest, was I equally conscious of loneliness. I was surrounded by the habitations of men; but I was destitute of associate or friend. I had money; but a horse-shelter or a morsel of food could not be purchased. I came for the purpose of relieving others, but stood in the utmost need myself. Even in health my condition was helpless and forlorn; but what would become of me should this fatal malady be contracted? To hope that an asylum would be afforded to a sick man which was denied to one in health was unreasonable.

The first impulse which flowed from these reflections was to hasten back to *Malverton*; which, with sufficient diligence, I might hope to regain before the morning light. I could not, methought, return upon my steps with too much speed. I was prompted to run as if the pest was rushing upon me, and could be eluded only by the most precipitate flight.¹

Brown, fortunately, did not establish a school in American fiction. He left almost no impression at all, not even upon his contemporaries. As Dr. Loshe says, "He remains an interesting, but, as far as novel-writing is concerned, an isolated, figure in the American literature of his time."² Godwin and Scott, true enough, borrowed a line or two from him, but many a greater author has borrowed from many a lesser one. To be borrowed from is the least of all the literary virtues. What counts is whether a writer is read. Brown was little read even in his life-time. Ten years after his death he was read only by the lazier subscribers to circulating libraries;³ and today he is completely forgotten by the intelligent reading public, and the literary historians, generally tardy in appraising the true worth of a respectably hollow man, are rapidly catching up with those whom they are supposed to lead.⁴

¹ *Op. cit.* First part. Phila. 1799. pp. 45-49.

² Loshe. p. 57.

³ Blake. p. 443.

⁴ Only two other novels were written in Pennsylvania before 1815, which deserve mention. They were "Fortunes Football: or, the Adventures of Mercutio. Founded on matters of Fact,"

5. JOSEPH DENNIE

Joseph Dennie is very little known today, but when he lived he was something of a literary storm centre. He was born in Boston in 1768.¹ Nineteen years later he was admitted to Harvard, and in six months he was suspended for insulting a tutor. He was readmitted and graduated. Then he studied law and practised for a while in Massachusetts. In 1795 he founded the weekly *Tablet*, "A Miscellaneous Paper devoted to the Belles Lettres." It died within a year. He then went to Walpole, at that time an important publishing centre, and was for a while on the staff of the *Farmer's Weekly Magazine*. About the same time he collaborated with Royall Tyler in a miscellany of light prose and verse, entitled "From the Shop of Messrs. Colon & Spondee." It is pretty flabby stuff. In 1800 he emigrated to Philadelphia, where, with Asbury Dukes, he began the publication of the *Port Folio*. It ran essays on art, politics, and religion, and also attempts at humor. Dennie used it chiefly as a medium to attack the Federal Constitution, which he did with great vigor. As a result of his political articles, which he generally signed "Oliver Oldschool," the *Port Folio* for a time was the leading weekly in the United States. He edited the paper till his death in 1812. It passed out shortly thereafter.

Dennie wrote one book, "The Lay Preacher," first published in Walpole, N. H., in 1796. A second edition was issued in 1801, a third in 1816, and a fourth in 1817. The second and third were published in Walpole, N. H., and the fourth in Philadelphia. The editor of the fourth edition complained bitterly of the neglect which had overtaken Dennie less than five years after his death.² But his protest was of no avail. Today Dennie is hardly a name. American literature has lost nothing thereby.

"The Lay Preacher" is a collection of essays in the manner of Addison and Oliver Goldsmith. Some of the titles follow: "On the Pleasures of Study," "On Meditation," "On Prosperity and Adversity," "The Man of Understanding," "On Versatility," "On

by James Butler. 2 vols. Harrisburg, Penna. 1797; and "Kelroy," by a Lady of Philadelphia (Rebecca Rush). Phila. 1812. Both were of the didactic-sentimental variety.

¹ The only biographical sketch of Dennie is "Joseph Dennie: Editor of the *Port Folio* and Author of 'The Lay Preacher,'" by William Worland Clapp. Cambridge, Mass. 1880.

² "The Lay Preacher," by Joseph Dennie. Collected and edited by John D. Hall. Phila. 1817. p. x.

Hospitality," "On Cleanliness," and "On Restlessness." Each essay is prefaced by a motto. That for the one "On Prosperity and Adversity" is Job XIII, 10-11. Dennie meditates on the problem of evil thus:

Like April showers, life is coquettish, capricious and changeable. Prosperity and adversity often succeed each other, like the vicissitudes of day and night. The unhappy sufferer, whom we have just left in an abyss of misfortune [Job] suddenly emerges, by the favour of Divine Providence, and his last days are fairer than the first. Having exercised a patience unparalleled, and displayed a *conscience void of offence*, his integrity is justly and graciously requited by a most magnificent reward. . . . No brother nor sister, nor old acquaintance, nor grateful friend, nor pampered guest, nor faithful servant, ever dreamed of visiting Job in poverty and affliction. Suddenly fortune smiles, and who then more smiling than the servile and parasitical followers of Fortune. The indigent Job is alone, the affluent Job is overwhelmed with the civilities of the crowds.¹

6. SALLY WISTER

Sally Wister was born on July 20, 1761, in Philadelphia. Her father was of German stock, and her mother, of Welsh.² Young Sally went to a Quaker school, where she learned Latin, French, geography, and arithmetic. There she met Deborah Norris, who became her life-long friend. Between school terms she kept up a constant correspondence with her. The Wister family fled from Philadelphia to Guynedd about the beginning of the Revolution, but Deborah's family remained behind. On September 25, 1777, two weeks after the Battle of Brandywine, the British army entered Germantown, and laid waste to it and the surrounding territory. Sally was thus unable to keep up her correspondence with Deborah, so instead she wrote down her

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 25-26.

² For my biographical facts I rely on the Introduction by Albert Cook Myers to his edition of "Sally Wister's Journal. A True Narrative. Being a Quaker Maiden's Account of Her Experiences With Officers of the Continental Army, 1777-1778." Phila. 1902; and "Sally Wister," by Edward W. Hocker, in "Historical Sketches, A Collection of Papers Prepared For the Historical Society of Montgomery County, Penna. Published by the Society. Vol. VI. 1929." pp. 181-184.

thoughts in a journal. She kept it up for the next nine months. The entries are written in the form of letters to Deborah, who did not see the journal till long after Sally's death. Deborah was then Mrs. George Logan. Sally died on April 21, 1804, at the age of forty-three. She never married.

The journal was first published in Philadelphia in 1902, under the editorship of Albert Cook Myers. It is not so important historically as he and Mr. Hocker and a few others believe. It is really no more than a collection of flirtation stories. They are surely not great literature, but they have interest as the product of a sixteen-year-old Quaker girl. They are, in brief, an amusing oddity, no more and no less. Sally complains every now and then of "A dull round of the same thing over again. I shall hang up my pen till something offers worth relating."¹ But when a handsome British officer came to town she found much "worth relating." For example:

First Day, Even'g.

Heigh-ho! Debby, there's no little meaning in that exclamation, ain't there. To me it conveys much. I have been looking what the dictionary says. It denotes uneasiness of mind. I don't know that my mind is particularly uneasy just now.

The occurrences of the day come just now. I left my chamber between eight and nine, breakfasted, went up to dress, put on a new purple and white striped Persian, white petticoat, muslin apron, gauze cap, and handkerchief. Thus array'd, Miss Norris, I ask your opinion. Thy partiality to thy friend will bid thee say I made a tolerable appearance. Not so, my dear. I was this identical Sally Wister, with all her whims and follies; and they have gained so great an ascendancy over my prudence, that I fear it will be a hard matter to divest myself of them. But I will hope for a reformation.

Cousin Hannah Miles came about nine, and spent the day with us. After we had din'd, two dragoons rode up to the door; one a waiting-man of Dandridge's, the faithful Jonathan. They are quarter'd a few miles from us.

The junior sisters (Liddy and Betsy), join'd by me, ventur'd to send our compliments to the Captain and Watts. Prissa insists that it is vastly indelicate, and that she has done with us. Hey

¹ Myers edition. p. 138.

day! What prudish notions are those, Priscilla! I banish prudery. Suppose we had sent our love to him, where had been the impropriety? for really he had a person that was love-inspiring, tho' I escap'd, and may say, *Io triumphe*, I answer not for the other girls, but am apt to conclude that Cupid shot his arrows, and may be they had effect.

A fine evening this. If wishes cou'd avail, I wou'd be in your garden with S. Jones, P. Fishbourn, and thyself. Thee has no objection to some of our North Wales swains,—not the beaus inhabitants of N—W—, but some of the transitory ones. But cruel reverse. Instead of having my wishes accomplish'd I must confine myself to the narrow limits of this farm.

Liddy calls: "Sally, will thee walk?" "Yes." Perhaps a walk will give a new turn to my ideas, and present something new to my vacant imagination.¹

7. MATHEW CAREY

Mathew Carey (1760–1839) came to this country in 1784, probably on the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin, whom he had met in Paris some time before. He settled in Philadelphia, and created all kinds of trouble there in the remaining fifty-five years of his life. In the same year in which he arrived in America he founded the *Pennsylvania Herald*, but soon gave it up. In September, 1786, he collaborated with four others in the editing of the *Columbian Magazine*, but because of personal differences with his colleagues he soon gave that up too. In January of the following year he founded the *American Museum*, "which shares with the *Columbian Magazine* the honor of being the first successful American magazine."² In 1793 he wrote an indifferent "History of the Yellow Fever," and in 1796 he put out a volume which he justly called "Miscellaneous Trifles." It was a collection of sentimental and detective short stories, Addisonian essays, and dramatic criticism. In 1799 he published his most interesting work, "A Plumb Pudding for the Humane, Chaste, and Enlightened Peter Porcupine," a bitter attack upon William Cobbett, the vindictive British editor, who lived in Philadelphia from 1792 to 1800, and

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 179–181.

² "A History of American Magazines," by Frank Luther Mott. N. Y. 1930. p. 100.

antagonized everybody with his scathing criticism of all things American. Carey had at him in the grand manner. His pamphlet is one of the most violent pieces of invective in American history. A sample :

Wretch as you are, accursed by God, and hated by man, the most tremendous scourge that hell ever vomited forth to curse a people, by sowing discord among them, I desire not the honor or credit of being abused or villified by you. . . . To send a challenge to a blasted, posted, loathsome coward . . . would sink me almost to a level with yourself. But, detested miscreant, if ever you dare approach the throne of heaven, pour out thanksgivings that I am so far inferior to you in bodily strength. Were I able to grapple with you single-handed, I swear by all my hopes of happiness, the inmost recesses of your dungeon-like labyrinth should not screen you from my vengeance ! Heavens ! what pride ! what pleasure ! I should feel in dragging you reeking from your den, and cow-skinning you till Argus himself should not be able to perceive a hair's breadth upon your carcase but sore upon sore ; so that were you and Lazarus candidates for the commiseration of the public you would carry of the palm.¹

A few weeks later Carey tackled Cobbett again in the "Porcupiad," a poem in four cantos. It is rather dull stuff. In the last thirty years of his life he wrote mainly political essays.

Poetry

I. FRANCIS HOPKINSON

The two poets of importance that Pennsylvania produced between 1780 and 1815 were Francis Hopkinson and his son Joseph. The father was a lawyer and legislator of prominence. He was born in 1737 in Philadelphia, educated at the College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania), and admitted to the bar in 1761.² For a time he served as royal tax collector for Pennsylvania, but when

¹ *Op. cit.* as quoted in "History of Philadelphia," by Scharf and Westcott. 3 vols. Phila. 1899. Vol. III. p. 1960.

² The best available biography of him is "The Life and Works of Francis Hopkinson," by George Everett Hastings. The Chicago University Press. 1926.

the Revolution came on he was removed. He was a delegate from New Jersey in the Continental Congress in 1776-1777, helped draft the Articles of Confederation, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and designed the flag of the United States. From 1779 to 1789 he was a judge of the admiralty, and in the remaining two years of his life a judge of the United States District Court for the eastern district of Pennsylvania. He died on May 9, 1791.

He was one of the most versatile men of early America. He was a member of numerous scientific and learned societies, both here and abroad. He was also an excellent harpsichordist and composer, and an amateur painter of some standing. He, and not Billings, as has hitherto been believed, was the first native American poet-composer.¹ He did considerable satirical writing during the Revolution, in both prose and verse. His ballad, "The Battle of the Kegs," has already been referred to on a previous page. He did similar things, in the way of prose, in "Letter of a Foreigner," "A Prophecy," "The New Roof," and "A Pretty Story," in all of which he held up to ridicule Britain's conduct toward the Colonies. He also wrote a number of serious and light essays, bearing such titles as "A New Game of Cards for the Improvement of Orthography," "Improved Method of Quilling a Harpsichord," "Speech of a Poet in the Assembly Room," and "An Improved Plan of Education." His complete writings were first issued in 1792,² and his songs, with his musical accompaniments, were first published in full only in 1919.³

Hopkinson's prose is only of average quality, and the same is true of his occasional poems. His songs are a bit better, but the best that can be said for them is that they are "distinctly musical and pleasing."⁴ They suggest Gray and Prior, yet there is something distinctive about them. They contain a candor, a freshness, and a freeness that were new in the America of their day. This, in the end, is their chief importance. The following song, "To Myrtilla" (1766) is an example of his early efforts in that field:

¹ See "Francis Hopkinson. The First American Poet-Composer, And Our Musical Life in Colonial Times." Address by O. G. Sonneck. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Committee on Historical Research. November 12, 1919. Published by the society.

² "The Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings of Francis Hopkinson, Esq." 3 vols. Phila. 1792. The work is as Hopkinson left it.

³ "The First American Composer" and "Colonial Love Lyrics," by H. V. Milligan. N. Y. 1919.

⁴ "The Cambridge History of American Literature." N. Y. 1927. Vol. I. Ch. IX. "The Beginnings of American Verse," by Samuel Marion Tucker. p. 177.

*With sprightly air, and graceful mien,
Easy and ever gay;
Myrtilla trips along the green,
And steals all hearts away.*

*Good-humour smiling in her face,
Seems sorrow to defy;
Wit lights up ev'ry sprightly grace,
And sparkles in her eye.*

*Fair is her form, her spotless mind
With ev'ry virtue blest;
And no offence could ever find
A harbour in her breast.*

*Ye swains, with caution pass this way;
For should you meet the fair,
You must to beauty fall a prey;
Love would your hearts ensnare.¹*

The following songs represent his later efforts. "Song I" (1788):

I.

*See down Maria's blushing cheek
The tears of soft compassion flow;
Those tears a yielding heart bespeak—
A heart that feels for others' woe.
May not those drops, that frequent fall,
To my fond hope propitious prove,
The heart that melts at Pity's call
Will own the softer voice of love.*

2.

*Earth ne'er produced a gem so rare
Nor wealthy ocean's ample space
So rich a pearl—as that bright tear
That lingers on Maria's face.*

¹ "The Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings of Francis Hopkinson, Esq." 3 vols. Phila. 1792. Vol. III. p. 143.

*So hangs upon the morning rose
 The crystal drop of heav'n refin'd,
 A while with trembling lustre glows —
 Is gone — and leaves no stain behind.¹*

“Song II” (1788):

I.

*My gen'rous heart disdains
 The slave of love to be,
 I scorn his servile chains,
 And boast my liberty.
 This wining
 And pining
 And wasting with care,
 Are not to my taste, be she ever so fair.*

2.

*Shall a girl's capricious frown
 Sink my noble spirits down?
 Shall a face of white and red
 Make me droop my silly head?
 Shall I set me down and sigh
 For an eye-brow or an eye?
 For a braided lock of hair,
 Curse my fortune and despair?
 My gen'rous heart disdains, &c.*

3.

*Still uncertain is to-morrow,
 Not quite certain is to-day —
 Shall I waste my time in sorrow?
 Shall I languish life away?
 All because a cruel maid,
 Hath not Love with Love repaid.
 My gen'rous heart disdains, &c.²*

¹ *Ibid.* p. 185.

² *Ibid.* p. 186.

2. JOSEPH HOPKINSON

Joseph Hopkinson wrote only one poem, "Hail Columbia" (1798), but for it he will be remembered long after his father, who wrote about five hundred. It is one of America's most popular national songs. Partially and in the form of parodies, at least, it is known to all the school boys of today, and it will probably be known to their successors a hundred years from now. Why so supposedly comprehensive a book as "The Cambridge History of American Literature" does not so much as mention it is a mystery.

Joseph Hopkinson was born in Philadelphia in 1770, and was graduated from his father's *alma mater*, the College of Philadelphia. He was a very successful lawyer. He was chief counsel for the prosecution in the celebrated libel suit of Dr. Benjamin Rush against William Cobbett (1799), and for Samuel Chase when he was impeached before the Senate (1804-1805). In 1815-1819 he was a representative in Congress, and from 1828 till his death in 1842 he was a judge of the United States District Court for Easton, Pa.

Hopkinson wrote "Hail Columbia," as he says, "in the Summer of 1798, when a war with France was thought to be inevitable, Congress being then in session in Philadelphia, deliberating upon that important subject."¹ A theatrical friend, who was in dire straits because his theatre had been practically empty for so long, asked him if "he could get a patriotic song adapted to the tune of 'The President's March,' then the popular air . . . I told him I would try for him.

He came the next afternoon, and the song, such as it is, was ready for him. It was announced on Monday morning, and the theatre was crowded to excess, and so continued, night after night, the audience joining in the chorus. It was also sung at nights in the streets by large assemblies of citizens, including members of Congress. The enthusiasm was general, and the song was heard, I may say, in every part of the United States.

As for his purpose in writing the poem, Hopkinson says:

The object of the author was to get up an *American spirit* which would be independent of and above the interests, passions, and

¹ I quote here from his own account of how he came to write the song, in the *Wyoming Bard* of Wilkes-Barré for August 24, 1840.

policy of both belligerents, and look and feel exclusively for our own honor and rights. Not an allusion is made either to France or England, or the quarrel between them, or to what was the most in fault in their treatment of us. . . . It was truly *American* and nothing else, and the patriotic feeling of every American heart responded to it.

It did for its time what "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," in a more effective and somewhat different way, did for the Civil War. It follows:

*Hail, Columbia! happy land!
Hail, ye heroes! heaven-born band!
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
And when the storm of war was gone,
Enjoyed the peace your valor won.
Let independence be our boast,
Ever mindful what it cost;
Ever grateful for the prize,
Let its altar reach the skies.*

*Firm, united, let us be,
Rallying round our Liberty;
As a band of brothers joined,
Peace and safety we shall find.*

*Immortal patriots! rise once more:
Defend your rights, defend your shore:
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Invade the shrine where sacred lies
Of toil and blood the well-earned prize.
While offering peace sincere and just,
In Heaven we place a manly trust,
That truth and justice will prevail,
And every scheme of bondage fail.*

Firm, united, etc.

Sound, sound, the trump of Fame!
Let WASHINGTON'S great name
Ring through the world with loud applause,
Ring through the world with loud applause;
Let every clime to Freedom dear,
Listen with a joyful ear.
With equal skill, and godlike power,
He governed in the fearful hour
Of horrid war; or guides, with ease,
The happier times of honest peace.
Firm, united, etc.

Behold the chief who now commands,
Once more to serve his country, stands —
The rock on which the storm will beat;
The rock on which the storm will beat.
But, arm'd in virtue firm and true,
His hopes are fix'd on Heaven and you.
When hope was sinking in dismay,
And glooms obscured Columbia's day,
His steady mind, from changes free,
Resolved on death or liberty.
Firm, united, etc.

3. WILLIAM CLIFTON, JOSEPH BLAIR LINN AND PETER MARKHOE

William Clifton (1772–1799) suffered the rupture of a blood vessel at the age of nineteen, and thus was too weak to engage in active business, so he wrote poetry. It was not much good. In 1795 he wrote "The Group," a satire on the gentlemen who served as home guards during the Revolution and after it claimed unto themselves the usual reward of patriots. It is feeble stuff, as is his "Rhapsody of the Times," an octosyllabic poem against unrestricted immigration. He also wrote some lyrics. Among them are "Mary Will Smile," "To a Robin," "To Fancy," and "A Flight of Fancy."¹ The first two and the last two stanzas of "A Flight of Fancy" follow:

¹ The four of them are in "Specimens of American Poetry. With Critical and Biographical Notices," by Samuel Kettell. 3 vols. Boston. 1829. Vol. II. pp. 87–93.

*For lonely shades, and rustic bed,
 Let philosophic spirits sigh;
 Ask no melancholy shed,
 No hermit's dreary cave, not I.*

*But where, to skirt some pleasant vale,
 Ascends the rude uncultured hill,
 Where 'midst its cliffs to every gale,
 Young Echo mocks the passing rill:*

. . .

*Come, come, my love, away with me,
 The morn of life is hastening by,
 To this gay scene we'll gaily flee,
 And sport us 'neath the peaceful sky.*

*And when that awful day shall rise,
 That sees thy cheek with age grow pale,
 And the soul fading in thine eyes,
 We'll sigh and quit the weeping vale.¹*

Joseph Blair Linn (1777-1804) was a playwright, preacher and poet. He was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia from 1799 till his death five years later. At the age of eighteen he issued in New York a volume of "Miscellaneous Works," made up of third rate verses, essays, and attempts at fiction. Two years later he wrote his one play, "Bourville Castle," which was produced with some success in New York. His best known piece of writing, however, was "The Powers of Genius," which went through "repeated editions in this country and England."² Its purpose, in his own words, was "to draw the general outlines of genius, to describe its progress, to ascertain the marks by which it may be known, and to give the prominent features of those writers who have excelled in its different departments."³ It is a dreadful work. Even Samuel Kettell, who tried hard enough, God knows, to find something to praise in all the early American poets, did not like it. He called it, accurately enough, "a string of desultory sketches made up by glancing indis-

¹ *Ibid.* pp. 90-93.

² Kettell. Vol. II. p. 123.

³ Quoted *ibid.* p. 123.

criminally at the various phenomena which the works of human intellect, of whatever degree or nature, exhibit.”¹

Peter Markhoe was born in the West Indies in 1753, came to Philadelphia in 1783, and died there probably in 1792. He wrote, under the pen name of “A Native of Algiers,” a tragedy, “The Patriot Chief” ; a comic opera, “The Reconciliation” ; and a satirical poem, “The Times.” They are all very pretentious and ineffective pieces.

¹ Kettell. Vol. II. p. 124.

CHAPTER XII

New Jersey Between 1770 and 1815

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New Jersey Between 1770 and 1815

I. JOHN WOOLMAN

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON (1723-1790) WAS THE ONLY MAN OF any standing that New Jersey produced in the field of political pamphleteering in the Revolutionary Era, and even he was a native of New York. The first nineteen years of his life he spent in Albany, and then, in 1762, he moved to Elizabethtown, N. J., where he rapidly achieved eminence as a lawyer. He was an ardent Whig during the Revolution, and contributed many a fiery article against Great Britain to the *New Jersey Gazette*, the *Boston Gazette* of that Colony. He usually wrote under the name of "Hortensius." He was a member of the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1776, and from then on till his death he was Governor of New Jersey, the first of the newly formed State. In 1774 he wrote "Philosophical Solitude," a didactic and satirical poem of small merit. Jonathan Odell (1737-1818), the Tory poet, satirized him in "The American Times" (1779).

All the other local revolutionary leaders were, in a manner of speaking, temporary importations from Pennsylvania: John Dickinson, Francis Hopkinson, Joseph Hopkinson, Thomas Paine, and Benjamin Franklin.

The two literati of any significance that New Jersey produced between 1770 and 1815 were John Woolman and Philip Freneau. The Colony continued on the same generally low cultural level as in the preceding century. John Woolman was born in 1720 in Northampton, N. J., of Quaker parents. His father was a farmer. When he reached his majority John went to the neighboring village of Mount Holly where he worked as a clerk in a general merchandise store. He also taught in the same village for a time. He began to preach about 1741. He traveled a great deal among the Quaker communities of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; but he was unable to make a living as a preacher, so he supported himself mainly by tailoring. He died of smallpox in York, England, in 1772.

His was one of the saintliest lives in all American history. His autobiography, or "Journal," as he called it, very probably is, as William Ellery Channing said of it, "beyond comparison the sweetest and purest . . . in the language."¹ He began it in 1756 and continued it, from time to time, till his death sixteen years later. Charles Lamb loved him for it, and once exclaimed, "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart!"² Henry Crabb Robinson, the English critic, called it, in 1824, "a perfect gem!" and of the man he said, "His is a '*schöne Seele*.'"³ And John Greenleaf Whittier said that he who reads it is aware "of a sweetness as of violets."⁴

All of these critics were right. There are a subdued mysticism, a kindliness, a Christian charity about Woolman that captivate all, even when he preaches the old-time morality, as in the following excerpt from the "Journal," wherein he records his meditations upon the rowdy sailor life as he encountered it on his trip to England, from which he never returned:

Being much among the seamen I have, from a motive of love, taken sundry opportunities with one of them at a time, and have in free conversation labored to turn their minds towards the fear of the Lord. This day we had a meeting in the cabin, where my heart was contrite under a feeling of Divine love.

I believe a communication with different parts of the world by sea is at times consistent with the will of our Heavenly Father, and to educate some youth in the practice of sailing, I believe may be right; but how lamentable is the present corruption of the world! How impure are the channels through which trade is conducted! How great is the danger to which poor lads are exposed when placed on shipboard to learn the art of sailing! Five lads training up for the seas were on board this ship. Two of them were brought up in our Society, and the other, by name James Naylor, is a member, to whose father James Naylor, mentioned in Sewel's history, appears to have been uncle. I often feel a tenderness of heart towards these poor lads, and at times look at them as though they were my children according to the flesh.

¹ Quoted in "The Journal of John Woolman," edited with an introduction by John Greenleaf Whittier. Boston. 1873. p. 2.

² "The Works of Charles Lamb." 4 vols. Boston. 1862. Vol. III. p. 84.

³ "The Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of H. Crabb Robinson," selected and edited by Thomas Sadler. 2 vols. Third edition. N. Y. 1872. Vol. I. p. 403.

⁴ Whittier introduction. p. 34.

O that all may take heed and beware of covetousness; O that all may learn of Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart. Then in faithfully following him he will teach us to be content with food and raiment without respect to the customs or honors of this world. Men thus redeemed will feel a tender concern for their fellow-creatures, and a desire that those in the lowest stations may be assisted and encouraged, and where owners of ships attain to the perfect law of liberty and are doers of the Word, these will be blessed in their deeds.

A ship at sea commonly sails all night, and the seamen take their watches four hours at a time. Rising to work in the night, it is not commonly pleasant in any case, but in dark rainy nights it is very disagreeable, even though each man were furnished with all conveniences. If, after having been on deck several hours in the night, they come down into the steerage soaking wet, and are so closely stowed that proper convenience for change of garments is not easily come at, but for want of proper room their wet garments are thrown in heaps, and sometimes, through much crowding, are trodden under foot in going to their lodgings and getting out of them, and it is difficult at times for each to find his own. Here are trials for the poor sailors.

Now, as I have been with them in my lodge, my heart hath often yearned for them, and tender desires have been raised in me that all owners and masters of vessels may dwell in the love of God and therein act uprightly, and by seeking less for gain and looking carefully to their ways they may earnestly labor to remove all causes of provocation from the poor seamen, so that they may neither fret nor use excess of strong drink; for, indeed, the poor creatures, in the wet and cold, seem to apply at times to strong drink to supply the want of other convenience. Great reformation is wanting in the world, and the necessity of it among those who do business on great waters hath at this time been abundantly opened before me.¹

The temptation to compare Woolman's "Journal" with Franklin's "Autobiography" is irresistible. The first is the product of an otherworldly man, a Christian in the Jesus tradition, a saint very much after the manner of St. Francis. The second is the product of a shrewd

¹ Whittier edition. pp. 126-130.

Yankee, with his eye constantly on the main chance. Woolman wrote about the evils of war and rum, of Negro slavery and of cruelty to animals with the same tender care and solicitation that Franklin wrote about the penny whistle which he bought as a boy at too high a price, and which he regretted to his dying day. Franklin, to be sure, was a far more civilized man, in the commonly accepted meaning of the word, than Woolman. He was a more "modern" man, but Woolman will probably be read and revered long after the Boston live wire is relegated to the company of Elbert Hubbard.

Woolman also wrote other things beside his "Journal": "Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes" (1754), wherein he preached the abolition of Negro slavery; "Considerations of the True Harmony of Mankind and How it is to be Maintained" (1770); and "A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich" (published after his death, in 1793). They make interesting sociological reading, but the consideration of them is hardly in place in a literary history. Woolman's complete works were issued in Dublin in 1794. They have not been republished since.

2. PHILIP FRENEAU

Jefferson was of the opinion that Freneau "saved our Constitution, which was galloping into monarchy."¹ E. C. Stedman found in him "the first essential poetic spirit in America."² Moses Coit Tyler called him "the poet of the Revolution."³ Professor Fred Lewis Pattee, his chief biographer and champion, has labeled him "the father of American poetry."⁴ And a more recent investigator has gone into long and laborious research to point out "What Made Freneau the Father of American Poetry."⁵ Yet Freneau remains in the obscurity which engulfed him soon after his death. The reason is a very simple one. He was a mediocre poet. He began nothing in the

¹ "The Writings of Thomas Jefferson," edited by P. L. Ford. 10 vols. N. Y. 1892-1899. Vol. I. p. 231.

² "Poets of America," by E. C. Stedman. Boston. 1896. p. 35.

³ "The Literary History of the American Revolution," by Moses Coit Tyler. 2 vols. N. Y. 1897. Vol. II. p. 246.

⁴ "The Poems of Philip Freneau, Poet of the Revolution." Edited for the Princeton Historical Association by Fred Lewis Pattee. 3 vols. Princeton, N. J. 1902. Vol. I. p. cxi.

⁵ *Op. cit.* by Harry Hayden Clark in *Studies in Philology*. Vol. XXVI. No. 1. pp. 1-2. See also Clark's introduction to his edition of "The Poems of Freneau." N. Y. 1929.

history of American literature, and he ended nothing. There were better poets before him, and there have been far better ones since. His talents were respectable enough, but they were also modest ones.

He was born in New York City on January 2, 1752, and was graduated from Princeton in 1771.¹ For Commencement he wrote, with Hugh Henry Brackenridge, the class poem, "The Rising Glory of America." He did considerable writing for the Philadelphia Whig papers, but Paine, Dennie, and the two Hopkinsons did far better. Partly to regain his health, and partly for commercial reasons he made two voyages to the West Indies in 1776 and 1780. In the latter year he was captured by the British and imprisoned in New York Harbor in the prison ship *Hunter*. He described his prison experiences the following year in "The British Prison Ship: A Poem in Four Cantos." It is dull stuff. Before that he had written two other poems, that were fairly popular: "Voyage to Boston" (1774) and "General Gage's Confession" (1781). He contributed many other patriotic poems, about that time, to the *Freeman's Journal* of Philadelphia. After the Revolution he was occupied as a shipmaster in the West Indian trade until 1791, when he was made editor of the *Nautical Gazette* of Philadelphia. He contributed verse to it and to many other papers in the vicinity. About 1800 he returned to seafaring, and kept at it till 1809. Subsequently he lived in Mt. Pleasant, N. J., where he edited a paper. He died on December 18, 1832.

Freneau was one of the most prolific verse writers in all American history. He issued at least five fair-sized volumes in his life-time: in 1786, 1788, 1795, 1809, and 1815, and they contained little of his newspaper poems. During this time he contributed heavily to the current political discussions. He was anti-Federalist and pro-French, and thus won the admiration of Jefferson, who exaggerated greatly his part in the ratification of the Constitution.² It was probably because of the prestige of Jefferson's opinion of him, and also because his complete poems were not collected till 1902, that he came to be known principally for his political verse, and that such historians as Tyler

¹ For my biographical information I rely on the Pattee introduction to Volume I of his three volume edition of Freneau's poems, and on "Philip Freneau: The Poet of the Revolution. A History of His Life and Times," by Mary S. Austin, edited by Helen Kearny Vreeland (great-grand-daughter of the poet). N. Y. 1901. The Austin book is purely biographical; there is little criticism in it.

² Washington, for an obvious reason, called him "that rascal Freneau." Quoted in Pattee, Vol. I. p. lx.

and Pattee have called him "the poet of the Revolution." His war ballads and songs were really far inferior to those written by many an unknown rhymster, and he never produced anything so moving as Joseph Hopkinson's "Hail Columbia!" The following lines from "On the Fall of General Earl Cornwallis" are typical of his revolutionary poetry:

*O come the time, nor distant be the day,
When our bold navy shall its wings display;
Mann'd by our sons, to seek that barbarous shore,
The wrongs revenging that their fathers bore:
As Samuel hew'd the tyrant Agag down,
So hew the wearer of the British crown;
Unpitying, next his offspring slay,
Or into foreign lands the fiends convey:
Give them their turn to pine and die in 'chains,
Till not one monster of the race remains.¹*

Freneau's lighter and more imaginative verse is not much better. Professor Cairns thinks that they prove that he was "possessed of a vivid and powerful imagination, a lightness and delicacy of poetic fancy, and even a considerable faculty of humor."² It is difficult to find much ground for this judgment. Freneau's first popular poem, "The Rising Glory of America," which he composed with the aid of Brackenridge, but which the latter confessed he had little to do with, certainly does not show it. It is a very mediocre performance, and not at all, as Professor Pattee thinks, "the first real poem that America ever made—the first poem that was impelled hot from a man's soul. It is more than this, it is the first real fruit of a new influence in the world of letters,—the first literary product of that mighty force that was to set in motion the American and French Revolutions."³ Nothing could be further from the truth. The first real poem in America was "Bacon's Epitaph by his Man," written anonymously in Virginia in 1646. As for the literary quality of "The Rising Glory of America," the following typical excerpt speaks for itself:

¹ Clark edition of Freneau's poems. p. 64.

² "A History of American Literature," by William B. Cairns. Revised edition. N. Y. 1930. p. 142.

³ Pattee. Vol. I. p. ciii.

*And when a train of rolling years are past,
 (So sung the exiled seer in Patmos isle)
 A new Jerusalem, sent down from heaven,
 Shall grace our happy earth,—perhaps this land,
 Whose ample bosom shall receive, though late,
 Myriads of saints, with their immortal king,
 To live and reign on earth a thousand years,
 Thence called Millennium. Paradise anew
 Shall flourish, by no second Adam lost,
 No dangerous tree with deadly fruit shall grow,
 No tempting serpent to allure the soul
 From native innocence.—A Canaan here,
 Another Canaan shall excel the old,
 And from a fairer Pisgah's top be seen.¹*

Freneau wrote a number of poems about the flora of America, but not one of them achieves any true greatness, or manages to rise much above the conventional. "The Wild Honey Suckle" (1786) is a fair example:

*Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
 Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
 Untouched thy honied blossoms blow,
 Unseen thy little branches greet:
 No roving foot shall crush thee here,
 No busy hand provoke a tear.*

*By Nature's self in white arrayed,
 She bade thee shun the vulgar eye,
 And planted here the guardian shade,
 And sent soft waters murmuring by;
 Thus quietly thy summer goes,
 The days declining to repose.*

*Smit with those charms, that must decay,
 I grieve to see your future doom;
 They died—nor were those flowers more gay,
 The flowers that did in Eden bloom;
 Unpitying frosts, and Autumn's power
 Shall leave no vestige of this flower.*

¹ Pattee edition. Vol. I. p. 83.

*From morning suns and evening dew
 At first thy little being came:
 If nothing once, you nothing lose,
 For when you die you are the same;
 The space between, is but an hour,
 The frail duration of a flower.¹*

He also wrote several verses to insects and animals, but was just as unsuccessful, as witness "On a Honey Bee Drinking from a Glass of Wine and Drowned Therein" (1809):

*Thou, born to sip the lake or spring,
 Or quaff the waters of the stream,
 Why hither come on vagrant wing? —
 Does Bacchus tempting seem —
 Did he, for you, this glass prepare? —
 Will I admit you to a share?*

*Did storms harass or foes perplex,
 Did wasps or king-birds bring dismay —
 Did wars distress, or labours vex,
 Or did you miss your way? —
 A better seat you could not take
 Than on the margin of this lake.*

*Welcome! — I hail you to my glass:
 All welcome, here, you find;
 Here, let the cloud of troubles pass,
 Here, be all care resigned. —
 This fluid never fails to please,
 And drown the griefs of men and bees.*

. . .

*Do as you please, your will is mine;
 Enjoy it without fear —
 And your grave will be this glass of wine,
 Your epitaph — a tear —*

¹ Pattee edition. Vol. II. pp. 306-307.

*Go, take your seat in Charon's boat,
We'll tell the hive, you died afloat.¹*

Finally, he was very much interested in the Indians and the fate that was overtaking them even in his own day, and he wrote several poems about them. He was much more successful with these efforts than with any of his others. "The Indian Burying Ground" (1788) is instinct with a certain dignity and sense of tragedy, but it is surely not made of the stuff that spells immortality. It follows:

*In spite of all the learned have said,
I still my old opinion keep;
The posture that we give the dead,
Points out the soul's eternal sleep.*

*Not so the ancients of these lands—
The Indian, when from life released,
Again is seated with his friends,
And shares again the joyous feast.*

*His imaged birds, and painted bowl,
And venison, for a journey dressed,
Bespeak the nature of the soul,
Activity, that knows no rest.*

*His bow, for action ready bent,
And arrows, with a head of stone,
Can only mean that life is spent,
And not the old ideas gone.*

*Thou, stranger, that shalt come this way,
No fraud upon the dead commit—
Observe the swelling turf, and say
They do not lie, but here they sit.*

*Here still a lofty rock remains,
On which the curious eye may trace
(Now wasted, half, by wearing rains)
The fancies of a ruder race.*

¹ Pattee edition. Vol. III. pp. 284-285.

*Here still an aged elm aspires,
 Beneath whose far-projecting shade
 (And which the shepherd still admires)
 The children of the forest played!*

*There oft a restless Indian queen
 (Pale Shebah, with her braided hair)
 And many a barbarous form is seen
 To chide the man that lingers there.*

*By midnight moons, o'er moistening dew;
 In habit for the chase arrayed,
 The hunter still the deer pursues,
 The hunter and the deer, a shade!*

*And long shall timorous fancy see
 The painted chief, and pointed spear,
 And Reason's self shall bow the knee
 To shades and delusions here.¹*

The English critic Jeffrey praised Freneau highly,² and so did S. G. W. Benjamin, Walter Scott, and Thomas Campbell. Scott borrowed from him in "Marmion" and Campbell in "O'Connor's Child."³ Nevertheless, he sank into respectable obscurity shortly after his death, and is there today despite all the labors of Tyler, Pattee, *et al.* to resurrect him. It is to be feared that he never will be resurrected. He was simply too mediocre a poet to outlive his time. He was not, as Professor Cairns thinks, "the most important American poet before Bryant."⁴ There were, to be sure, traces in him of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Pope, but only traces. He never rose to within miles of their level. His verses were no better than those of many of his American contemporaries. Like many another colonial writer he has been praised far beyond his merits by critics who were patriots first and judges of *belles lettres* second.

¹ Pattee edition. Vol. II. pp. 369-370.

² Pattee introduction to Vol. I. of his edition. p. iii.

³ There is a full discussion of these points *ibid.* p. xiv ff.

⁴ Cairns. p. 145.

CHAPTER XIII

New York Between 1770 and 1815

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DURING THE REVOLUTION NEW YORK WAS THE HEADQUARTERS of the commander-in-chief of the British army, and was the centre of some of the great battles of the war, but culturally it continued in the same low level as in the previous one hundred years. New York City, the chief town, "was the market, the port of entry and the outlet, not, indeed, as now, for a continent, but for what was for that day a wide and populous area—half of New Jersey and more than half of Connecticut, and Western Massachusetts, which, with the Hudson Valley and its tributaries, comprised perhaps a sixth of the whole population of the Colonies."¹ It was, in short, a highly commercial town. "Hospitable, even lavish, in its entertainment, it seemed 'unintellectual' and 'over material' to a Bostonian, somewhat 'pushing' to a Southerner."² It tolerated differences of religious beliefs far more than any of its sister Colonies, but maybe that was because, as some of its critics claimed, it was less interested in opinions than in profits. John Adams said of it: "With all the opulence and splendor of this city, there is little good breeding to be found. . . . At their entertainments there is no conversation that is agreeable; there is no modesty, no attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and altogether."³ Thus the city continued to be till the time of Bryant, when it became the new literary centre of the United States.

Its greatest political figure was Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804). As a boy of seventeen, while still a student at King's College (now Columbia), he wrote the most effective answer to William Seabury's (1729–1796) Tory "Westchester Farmer Letters." In 1793 he wrote a series of essays under the name of "Pacificus," in which he advocated neutrality in the current British-French hostilities. A bit later he published another series of essays, this time under the name of "Camillus," in support of the Jay Treaty. But his most celebrated

¹ "New York in the American Revolution," by Wilbur C. Abbott. N. Y. 1929. p. 5.

² *Ibid.* p. 5.

³ Quoted *ibid.* p. 6.

political writings were his contributions to "The Federalist," which has already been discussed in the chapter on James Madison. A staunch Federalist, he differed basically from Madison on governmental theory, though they agreed on matters of administration. He was an excellent political pamphleteer, not as urbane or learned, perhaps, as Madison, but gifted with the same clear, vigorous and highly effective style.

The only other New York writers that deserve mention are William Dunlap (1766-1839) and Joseph Rodman Drake (1759-1820). Dunlap was the manager of a New York theatre, and wrote, adapted and translated a number of plays.¹ He also wrote a life of George Frederick Cook the actor and of Charles Brockden Brown the novelist. They are both very badly done, but they contain facts not to be obtained elsewhere. Drake was a poet. His two most popular poems were "The Culprit Fay" and "The American Flag." They are both of negligible worth. The following is the first stanza of "The American Flag":

*When Freedom from her mountain height
Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of night,
And set the stars of glory there.
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes
The milky baldric of the skies,
And striped its pure celestial white
With streakings of the morning light;
Then from his mansion in the sun
She called her eagle bearer down,
And gave into his mighty hand
The symbol of her chosen land.²*

¹ An extended discussion of him as a playwright will be found below in Chapter XVI, "The Theatre in 1765-1815."

² "The Culprit Fay, and Other Poems," by John Rodman Drake. N. Y. 1836. p. 9.

CHAPTER XIV

The Other Colonies

CHAPTER XIV

The Other Colonies

THE ONLY TWO WRITERS OF ANY WORTH AT ALL THAT MARYLAND produced were Francis Scott Key (1730-1843), author of "The Star-Spangled Banner," and John Shaw (1778-1809). Key was born in Frederick, Md., the son of a veteran of the Revolution. He was a lawyer by profession, and later on in his life he was district attorney of Washington. He wrote the national anthem while detained on a British ship during the attack on Fort McHenry, near Baltimore, on April 13, 1814. It was first printed as a broadside, and set to the music of "Anacreon in Heaven," the official song of the Anacreontic Society of London. Nobody now claims it to be distinguished poetry. Shaw was a physician by profession. His "Poems" were published in 1810, one year after his death.

The following are the first and the last stanzas of "The Star-Spangled Banner":

*O say, can you see, by the dawn's early light
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming—
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, through the clouds of the
fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming!
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?*

*O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserved us a nation.*

*Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto—"In God is our trust:"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.*

The following is the first stanza of Shaw's "Sleighting Song":

*When calm is the night, and the stars shine bright,
The sleigh glides smooth and cheerily;
And mirth and jest abound,
While all is still around,
Save the horses' trampling sound,
And the horse-bells tinkling merrily.¹*

In Georgia and the Carolinas the literary situation was even worse than in Maryland. Samuel Kettell, the super-industrious anthologist, who lets no jingler of even the slightest merit pass his patriotic eye, lists only three poets for both Colonies. They are William Crafts, Henry T. Farmer, and Edward C. Holland. They were all from South Carolina. William Crafts was born in Charleston on January 24, 1787, and was educated at Harvard. He then returned to his native city, where he became a lawyer. For a time he was editor of the *Charleston Courier*. He died in New York City in September, 1826. A volume of his essays and poems was issued in 1828.² Henry T. Farmer was also a native of Charleston. He published a book of poems in 1819.³ Holland wrote some verse for the *Philadelphia Port Folio* in 1813.⁴

¹ "Poems," by John Shaw. N. Y. 1810. p. 24.

² "Specimens of American Poetry. With Critical and Biographical Notices," by Samuel Kettell. 3 vols. Boston. 1829. Vol. II. pp. 144-145.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 174-179.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 328-329.

CHAPTER XV

*Scholarship and the Pursuit of the Arts
in Revolutionary America*

CHAPTER XV

Scholarship and the Pursuit of the Arts in Revolutionary America¹

WHEN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WAS SIGNED there were only nine colleges in the Thirteen Colonies: Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), King's College (now Columbia), Rutgers, the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania), the College of Rhode Island (now Brown), and Dartmouth. But during the next forty years many other schools of higher learning sprang up throughout the country, so that by 1815 there were at least thirty of them. The more prominent among them and those that lived on for any appreciable length of time, beside the aforementioned nine, were Bowdoin, Middlebury, Ohio University, Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, the University of Vermont, Williams College, Union College, Hamilton, Dickinson, Hampden-Sidney, and Transylvania in Kentucky—all these in the North and West. In the South, beside William and Mary in Virginia, there were Charleston College, the University of Georgia, the University of North Carolina, and St.

¹ For my information in this section I rely chiefly on the following books and magazine articles: "On the Development of American Literature From 1815 to 1833. With Especial Reference to Periodicals," by William B. Cairns. Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin. Philology and Literature Series. Vol. I. No. 1. pp. 1-87. Madison, Wis. March, 1898; "History of the United States From 1801-1817," by Henry Adams. Vol. I. Boston. 1889; "Recollections of a Lifetime, or Men and Things I Have Seen," by S. G. Goodrich. 2 vols. N. Y. 1857; "The Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. With Extracts from his Journals and Correspondence," by Samuel Longfellow. 2 vols. Boston. 1886; "A Biography of William Cullen Bryant. With Extracts from his Private Correspondence," by Parke Godwin. 2 vols. N. Y. 1883; "The Old Time College President," by George P. Schmidt. The Columbia University Press. 1930; "A Literary History of the American Revolution," by Moses Coit Tyler. 2 vols. N. Y. 1897. Vol. II. Ch. XXXIX, "The Writers of History"; "Anniversary Address on the Progress of the Natural Sciences in the United States. Delivered Before the Lyceum of Natural History of New York, February, 1826," by John De Kay. N. Y. 1826; "The Beginnings of Natural History in America. An Address Delivered at the Sixth Anniversary Meeting of the Biological Society of Washington," by G. Brown Goode. Washington. 1886; "The History of American Music," by L. C. Elson. N. Y. 1904; "Early Concert Life in America: 1731-1800," by O. G. Sonneck. Leipzig. 1907; and "Art in the Early South," by Mary H. Flournoy. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. Duke University. Durham, N. C. October, 1930.

Mary's at Baltimore. The Northern colleges were somewhat better than the Southern ones. Before 1815, says Dr. Schmidt, "there was with the exception of William and Mary, not a college worthy of the name, south of the Potomac."¹ The truth was, however, that none of the colleges in America at the time were much better than what would nowadays be called high-schools. The Eighteenth Century version of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* was the rule in all of them, and "arithmetic was regularly a freshman course of study as late as 1829."²

Nearly all of the colleges before 1815 were under religious auspices, especially Presbyterian and Baptist, but religion was by no means the sole subject of instruction, and few of the graduates entered the ministry. "Of the 478 who graduated at Princeton [a Presbyterian stronghold, then as now] during the administration of President Witherspoon, 1769-1794, only 114, or 23%, entered the ministry, while the same group of students furnished one President of the United States, one Vice-President, ten Cabinet officers, six members of the Continental Congress, twenty-one United States Senators, thirty-nine Representatives, three justices of the Supreme Court, twelve State Governors, and fifty-six members of State Legislatures."³ Most of the colleges, as has been said, were listed as Presbyterian, "but they were not in every case owned, financed and operated by the church as such." Sometimes the local presbyteries exercised direct control, "but more often they were community enterprises, conducted for the benefit of all who could meet the entrance requirements, and governed by self-constituted and self-perpetuating boards of trustees."⁴ The governing officers, of course, all had to be good members of the faith. A few of the colleges were absolutely non-denominational. The three most important of them were the University of Virginia, the College of Philadelphia, and the University of the State of New York. The first two were founded, respectively, by the deists Jefferson and Franklin, and the third by a group of aggressive young rationalists of New York City at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century.

The old time college president was a far different personage from his successor today. He was generally a clergyman, and the greater part of his time was taken up with the instruction of the senior class, and often of one or two other classes. He was really little more than

¹ Schmidt. pp. 35-36.

² Cairns. p. 7.

³ Schmidt. p. 20.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 28-29.

a head teacher; problems of administration were few, and they somehow managed to solve themselves for the most part. Most of the old presidents have been forgotten, but four or five of them were men of real distinction and played a prominent part in the life of their times. The best known were Samuel Johnson, the first American philosopher and the first president of King's College (now Columbia), Presidents Witherspoon and Smith of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), Francis Wayland of the College of Rhode Island (now Brown), and Provost Andrews of the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania). Most of their colleagues, however, were a cautious and conservative lot, and naturally so. "The presidents were the guardians of vested interests and inherited traditions. A going concern like the average American college had apparently much more to lose than to gain by adopting all manner of innovations. But an even stronger deterrent to radical thought was the profession to which most of the presidents belonged. For with few exceptions, they were clergymen."¹

The book business, in the period between 1765 and 1815, was about as bad as it had been during the 150 years preceding. "Books, while in one way and another within the reach of most, were comparatively scarce. Not many were published in the United States."² And the few that were published were mainly reprints of English best-sellers. The American publishers seldom undertook a native author; it was much more profitable for them to pirate London books, on which they had to pay no royalty. Before 1820, as one authority points out, "the successful booksellers of the country — Carey, Small, Thomas, Warner, of Philadelphia; Campbell, Duyckinck, Reed, Kirk & Mercein, Whiting & Watson, of New York; Beers & Hilliard, R. P. G. Williams, S. T. Armstrong, of Boston — were for the most part the mere reproducers and sellers of English books."³ Byron, Wordsworth, and Scott were beginning to be read in the United States about 1815, but the height of their popularity did not come till the two decades following. Theretofore the authors most read in America were the classics and the better established English writers of fifty and a hundred years preceding. Parke Godwin says the following books were in the library of William Cullen Bryant's father:

¹ *Ibid.* p. 135.

² Cairns. p. 12.

³ Goodrich. Vol. II. p. 110.

Hume, Gibbon, Rollin, Russell, Gillies, Plutarch, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Akenside, Goldsmith, Thompson, Burns, Cowper, Beattie, Falconer, Campbell ("Pleasures of Hope"), Hogg, Montgomery, Rogers, Scott ("Lady of the Isles"), Byron ("Lara," "Bride of Abydos," and "Corsair"), Southey ("Thalaba and Minor Poems"), and Wordsworth ("Lyrical Ballads"); and in other departments, Burke, Chesterfield, the *Spectator*, Fielding, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Adam Clark's "Travels," Park's "Travels," Disraeli's "Curiosities of Literature," and Sismondi's "Literature of the South of Europe."¹

The French rationalists and encyclopedists, especially Voltaire, D'Alembert, and Rousseau, were, of course also read, particularly in the Southern and Middle Colonies; but the great Romantic literature of Germany was almost completely unknown. Says Henry Adams: "Germany was nearly as completely unknown as China, until Madame de Staël published her famous work in 1814. Even then young George Ticknor, incited by its account of German university education, could find neither a good teacher, nor a dictionary, nor a German book in the shops or the public libraries of the city or at the college in Cambridge."² Why this was so it is not easy to make out, but two possible reasons come to mind. First, few Americans ever went further east in Europe than Paris. Franklin and Joel Barlow were perhaps the only prominent Americans before 1815 who traversed the continent at all, and they only for a short while. The Revolutionary leaders of the New World were primarily interested in political thinking, and the centre of it all in their day was Paris. Germany, true enough, had produced Baron Samuel von Pufendorf, author of the celebrated "*Elementa Jurisprudentiæ Universalis*" and "*De Jure Naturæ et Gentium*," from both of which they borrowed heavily, but he had been dead since 1694, and his country did not produce another like him in the Eighteenth Century.

Second, there was the strange German metaphysics and mysticism, which the Americans, for some reason or other, could not grasp at the time. Goethe's "*Faust*" was either a complete blank to them, or the work of the Devil. Fitz-Greene Halleck's remark about it is well known: "The worst book, in the strongest sense of the word worst,

¹ Godwin. Vol. I. p. 59.

² Adams. Vol. I. p. 94.

that I have ever read through.”¹ It was only forty years later that Emerson and Channing could find any sense in it, but they had been trained for twenty-five years in Unitarian-Congregational dialectics.

In the field of historical scholarship the Revolutionary Americans produced a number of valuable documents, but none of them compares in either significance or interest to Bradford’s “History of Plymouth Plantation” or Winthrop’s “Journal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.” There is no grand lift to them, and little massive conviction. Frequently they are also unreliable. The Rev. Amos Adam’s “Concise Historical View of the Perils, Hardships, Difficulties, and Discouragements which have attended the Planting and Progressive Improvement Of New England,” published in Boston in 1769, reads almost like a table of statistics. Isaac Backus of Connecticut composed an equally dull two volume “History of New England, with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians called Baptists. Collected from most authentic Records and Writings, both Ancient and Modern.” The first volume was published in Boston in 1777, and the second in Providence in 1784. Mercy Warren’s three volume “History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution. Interspersed with Biographical, Political, and Moral Reflections” (Boston, 1805) has been discussed on a previous page. Her book is really a series of puerile homilies; it is hardly history in any sense of the term. Pretty much the same is true of the Rev. William Gordon’s² four volume “History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America” (London, 1788). Tyler says of it, “The book, . . . though written by a man who strove hard to be accurate, is defaced by many errors both of fact and of opinion.”³ As for Governor Thomas Hutchinson’s three volume “History of the Massachusetts Bay Colony” (London, 1767–1789), which has been discussed on a preceding page, James Savage, Charles Francis Adams, Charles Deane and others have praised it highly, but Tyler, still the most authoritative historian of the period, is full of doubts. He points out, rightly enough, that, from the point of view of sheer writing, there are very few salient passages in it, and he adds: “As to the rarer intellectual and spiritual endowments of a great historian, — breadth

¹ Quoted by Cairns. p. 23.

² He was pastor of the Third Congregational Church of Roxbury, Mass., from 1772 to 1786.

³ Tyler. Vol. II. p. 427.

of vision, breadth of sympathy, the historic imagination, and the power of style,—these Hutchinson almost entirely lacked.”¹

The only two other histories of Revolutionary times that have arrested even the antiquarians are those of Robert Proud and Morgan Edwards, both of Philadelphia. The first was a Quaker. He was born in England in 1728, and from 1759 till his death in 1813 was a resident of Pennsylvania, mainly in Philadelphia. In 1797–1798 he published, in two volumes, “The History of Pennsylvania, in North America, from the Original Institution and Settlement of that Province under the first Proprietor and Governor William Penn, in 1661, till after the Year 1742.” Morgan Edwards was a Baptist. In 1770 he issued the first two volumes of “Materials towards a History of the American Baptists. In Twelve Volumes.” He did not live to write any additional volumes.

There were far more opportunities to hear good music, especially of the secular variety, in 1765–1815, than in the preceding colonial era. This was especially true of the South. The St. Cecilia Musical Society of Charleston was founded in 1762, twenty-four years before the Stoughton Musical Society of Massachusetts. Maryland and Virginia, due mainly to the efforts of Thomas Jefferson, enjoyed symphonic and vocal concerts long before the Revolution, and after it they had more. New Orleans was the first American city to establish opera permanently. “The Barber of Seville” was sung there by a French company in 1810, and three years later “Romeo and Juliet” was presented.² Up north such things were a bit late in coming, since they had to do battle with the prevailing Puritan prejudice against all music save psalms and hymns, but by 1815 “the American public [at large] had opportunity to hear the symphonies of Hadyn and Pleyel (then his rival everywhere) and others then in vogue.”³ As to native composers the America of the time, naturally, did not produce any Mozarts or Beethovens, but it did produce many able and sincere musicians. Among those “who shaped the destiny of our concert-life” Dr. Sonneck, the best authority in the field, lists Francis Hopkinson, James Bremner, Andrew Adgate, John Bentley, William Tuckey, Alexander Reinagle, James Hewitt, Josiah Flagg, and William Selby.⁴

In painting there were a number of artists who achieved reputa-

¹ Tyler. Vol. II. pp. 405–406.

² Flournoy. p. 404 ff.

³ Sonneck. p. 324.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 325.

tions abroad as well as in this country: Washington Allston, Gilbert, West, Copley, Trumbull, Vanderlyn, Jarvis, Peele, Cole, Harding, S. F. B. Morse (who also invented the telegraph), Eliot, and Mount. The fundamental fact about painting in that early era was that it was European painting transplanted to America. Nevertheless, it was all of a workmanlike order. And so were the other arts, especially architecture, in which the South made the most creditable showing. Jefferson dreamed of making the Classic a national type of architecture, as is evident by what he did for the University of Virginia, and he impressed it upon the minds of his fellow Southerners that the architecture of a community had much to do with its desirability as a place to live in. As a result they "pored over books illustrating the style of Inigo Jones and Wren, and of French and Chinese Chippendale."¹ They induced Sir Christopher Wren to send a design from London for William and Mary College, the only real design of his in the Colonies. They borrowed other ideas from Europe, such as high stuccoed walls, hanging balconies, and long windows opening on walks. Soon the South became the architectural show place of America. "Josiah Quincy, of Massachusetts, was so struck with the architectural beauty of Charleston, S. C., that he said he 'found there what he never expected to find in America.'"²

In the natural sciences—mineralogy, geology, botany, zoölogy, physics, and chemistry—the Colonies remained somewhat backward. The two chief scientific events in the period under consideration were Franklin's electrical experiments and the launching of Robert Fulton's steamboat on the Hudson in 1807. But neither of them involved any new principles of physics; the theories behind them were part of the common knowledge of the time. In chemistry there were Drs. Benjamin Rush and James Woodhouse of the College of Philadelphia, and Dr. Benjamin Silliman of Yale, all three of them excellent men, but rather because of their quick eyes for the progress that was being made in Europe than because of their own contributions. Joseph Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen, came to this country in 1794, and lived here till his death in 1804, but the divine fire within him somehow failed to catch on to the Americans.

It was the same with botany, mineralogy, geology, and zoölogy. Jefferson's "Notes on Virginia" (1781) and Moses Bartram's "Travels through North and South Carolina" (1791) were little

¹ Flournoy. p. 413.

² *Ibid.* p. 413.

more than rough field notes. As a matter of fact, the only botanists of any standing at all in this country were pupils of Linnæus, whom he sent here to gather data because he could not rely on the information the native amateurs were mailing to him.

This apparent neglect of the natural sciences can be explained in large part by the current economic and political conditions. Says Dr. De Kay: "Although a few works of merit had appeared at distant intervals, yet the natural sciences were but partially cultivated. The few individuals who had turned their attention to such pursuits were too widely scattered over this extensive country to allow of that familiar interchange of opinions which necessarily elicits further inquiries and discoveries."¹ But there was probably another reason: the American's lack of interest in all science save in its immediate practical uses. There is significance in the fact that the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, which was founded by President Ezra Stiles of Yale in 1796, and had among its members Joseph Priestley and Benjamin Silliman, published only one volume of transactions, and then died, not to be resurrected till 1866!

The United States, before 1815, when the national idea first gripped the land in earnest, had very little of an indigenous culture. We were still a British Colony in every respect save the political. We borrowed everything from it, or from France as it was transmitted to us from London: our literature, our music, our architecture, our science, and even our manners. We were a long time in winning our cultural independence, and in more than one way are still a European outpost. But after 1815 we at least became conscious, on a large scale, of our vassalage. Before that we took it as a matter of course.

¹ De Kay. pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER XVI

The Theatre in 1765-1815

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*The Theatre in 1765-1815*¹

ON OCTOBER 20, 1774, THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS ORDERED that the Colonies "discountenance and discourage all horse racing and all kinds of gaming, cock fighting, exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments."² Douglass and his Hallam Company, who had produced plays in America during the preceding twenty-five years, therefore emigrated to the West Indies, where they remained till after the cessation of hostilities. But the land was not without plays in the intervening eight years. The British officers took over all the Continental theatres, and put on many performances in them. Thus from 1775 to 1783, the year before the declaration of peace, "the American stage was in full control of the British military, who occupied all the existing theatres and produced plays in the professional manner, for charity, amusement, and profit."³

Naturally, the period presented a fine opportunity to the local literary patriots to have at the British, and many of them chose the play form. "The first American writer to use the play form as a vehicle for political satire,"⁴ was Mrs. Mercy Warren, wife of General Warren and sister of James Otis. She wrote "The Adulator" (1773), "The Group" (1775), and "The Blockheads, or the Affrighted Officers" (1777). None of them was a drama in any rational sense of the word; they were all little more than second-rate political pamphlets. There were other things written at the time of a similar sort: "The Fall of British Tyranny," by Joseph Leacock;

¹ For my information in this section I rely chiefly on the following: "A History of the Theatre in America. From its Beginnings to the Present Time," by Arthur Hornblow. Vol. I. Philadelphia, 1919; "The Early Drama, 1756-1860," by Arthur Hobson Quinn, in "The Cambridge History of American Literature." Vol. I; "An Hour of American Drama," by Barrett Clark. Philadelphia, 1930; and "James Nelson Barker: 1784-1858. With a Reprint of his Comedy, 'Tears and Smiles,'" by Paul H. Musser. The University of Pennsylvania Press. 1929.

² Quoted by Quinn. p. 216.

³ Hornblow. p. 148.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 150.

and "The Battle of Bunker Hill" and "The Death of General Montgomery," both tragedies in verse by Hugh Henry Brackenridge.

Up to 1775 "the sober Bostonians had been deaf to all appeals to permit dramatic performances in the city."¹ But the British officers disregarded the local sentiment, and under the direction of General Burgoyne, himself something of an actor and playwright, turned Faneuil Hall into a theatre. The titles of the plays they produced have been lost to history. The officers acted all the parts, "the younger, smoothed-faced subalterns taking the feminine rôles." The idea of the thing spread to New York, where the military actors began their list of performances at the John Street Theatre on January 25, 1777, with Fielding's burlesque, "Tom Thumb." From New York the idea leaped to Philadelphia. The British officers stationed there opened their run at the Southwack Theatre on January 19, 1778, and during the next five months produced "Douglas," Shakespeare's "Henry IV," "Wonder," and "Constant Couple."

Some of the Colonies disregarded the edict of the Continental Congress against play producing in time of war. Maryland was the chief offender. A company, made up mostly of local talent, started a season in Baltimore on January 15, 1782, and in the next six months put on some excellent pieces, including Shakespeare's "Richard III," Garrick's "Miss in Her Teens" and "Lethe," Otway's "Orphan" and "Venice Preserved," Centlivre's "Busybody" and "Wonder," Rowe's "Tamerlane," Hill's "Zara," Moore's "Gamester," and Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer."

In 1787, after the declaration of peace, the Hallam Company returned to the United States from the West Indies. They first went to Philadelphia, but they had little success there, so they went to New York, where, on April 16, 1787, they produced in the John Street Theatre, "The Contrast," by Royall Tyler. It was the first native American comedy, and was an immediate success. Its theme is the contrast between simple, inborn dignity, characterized by Colonel Manly, and the upstart frivolities of the times, characterized by Dimple, Charlotte, and Letitia. But its chief character is Jonathan, the servant of Manly. He is the prototype of the shrewd Yankee of tradition. Tyler also wrote a comic opera in two acts, "May Day in Town, or New York in an Uproar," first produced at the John Street Theatre on May 18, 1787; and a satire on the rage for speculating in

¹ Hornblow. p. 151.

the Georgia lands of the Yazoo purchase, entitled "A Georgia Spec, or Land in the Moon," first produced at the Haymarket Theatre, Boston, on October 30, 1797.

About the same time there lived in New York a man of somewhat greater importance in theatrical history than Royall Tyler. He was William Dunlap, who was the first American to make the writing of plays a profession, and who therefore has been called "the father of the American drama." His first play, "The Father," a comedy inspired by "The Contrast," was produced in New York on September 7, 1789. After that he wrote nearly sixty other plays, and most of them were successes. He also adapted numerous German and French plays, and was the first to introduce Kotzebue to America. Among his thirty or forty adaptations were the following: Kotzebue's "The Stranger" (1789), "False Shame" (1799), and "The Virgin of the Sun" and "Fraternal Discord" (both 1800); Zschokke's "Abaelino" (1801); and Schiller's "Don Carlos" (1799). His most successful play was the Revolutionary "André" (1798), which he later rewrote as "The Glory of Columbia" (1803). Beside adapting the plays of others and writing plays of his own Dunlap was also manager of the American Company from 1796 to 1805 and from 1806 to 1811. He then sank into obscurity and died in 1839. None of his plays has ever been revived.

About the beginning of the Nineteenth Century New York lost its preëminence as a theatrical centre, and its place was taken by Philadelphia. Up to then the town looked down upon all plays. No drama was ever advertised as such. "Hamlet" was generally called "Filial Piety," and described as "a moral and instructive tale as exemplified in the history of the Prince of Denmark"; "The School for Scandal" was designated as "a comic lecture in five parts on the pernicious vice of scandal"; "She Stoops to Conquer" was retitled "Improper Education"; "Richard III" became "Fate of Tyranny," and "The Rivals" became "Crime of Filial Ingratitude." What was the Southwack Theatre in the wild days of 1730 now became the Southwack Opera House. Needless to say, the moralists of Philadelphia soon caught on to the ruse, and redoubled their efforts to stamp out the theatre from Philadelphia. Dr. Logan, one of their leaders, said that "theatres were fit only for monarchies," and his colleague, Dr. Whitehill, was of the opinion that "no regulation could prevent the vice and immorality of the theatre." But their protests were in vain. A more civilized attitude had come to prevail, and people of promi-

nence, such as George Clymes and Robert Morris, both signers of the Declaration of Independence, leaped to the defence of the ancient art. The former thundered up and down the State that "the theatre is a concomitant of an independent state."¹

The two chief dramatists of the Philadelphia Renaissance were James Nelson Barker and John Howard Payne. Barker's first play, "Tears and Smiles" (1807), was a comedy after the manner of Tyler's "The Contrast." The next year he produced "The Indian Princess," which was probably the first dramatic version of the Pocahontas story. In 1824 he presented "Superstition," the theme of which was the witchcraft mania of New England in the last decade of the Seventeenth Century. His chief virtue was that he always worked with native material.

Payne was different. He used mainly foreign subjects, English, French, or German. He wrote some sixty-four plays, most of them melodramas or farces. Only nineteen of them have ever been published. His "Home Sweet Home" was first sung in his opera "Clari" in 1823.

In Boston it was not till 1792 that the town was permitted to have a public theatre. In 1750 the General Court of the Colony forbade all play performances, and "for over forty years after the passage of the law—if we except the period when the British were in control—it was easier for a camel to pass through the proverbial needle than for play actors to find shelter in the good city of Boston."² But in the last decade of the Eighteenth Century the bar was let down somewhat, and a number of theatres sprang up. The best known of them were the Federal Street Theatre, opened in 1794, and the Haymarket Theatre, opened two years later. For a time the town was the first American stop of the leading actors of contemporary England. The playgoing Bostonians of that period were an unusually rough lot. Says the historian George O. Seilhamer, describing a typical incident in the Federal Street Theatre:

The musicians printed a card in the newspapers begging the thoughtless or ill disposed not to throw apples, stones or other missiles into the orchestra. While the brutality toward the orchestra indicated by this appeal was not confined to Boston, but was equally characteristic of New York and Philadelphia, the

¹ Hornblow. pp. 174-175.

² *Ibid.* p. 223.

Boston gallery was the only one in the country at the time that assaulted the musicians merely for the sake of assaulting them.¹

The two plays of Revolutionary America that were of any importance were Tyler's "The Contrast" and Barker's "Tears and Smiles." Tyler's career as a novelist and poet has been sketched on a previous page. His play, "The Contrast," was performed in New York five times in quick succession, and was later repeated in Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Charleston—an amazing record for those days. But it has never been revived since. The reason is simple. The play is worthless as drama. It has almost no plot, and is extremely deficient in incident. It was popular chiefly because of the fact that its chief character Jonathan "introduced for the first time the stage Yankee, a low-comedy rôle in which Wignell [the favorite native actor then] made the hit of his career."² Historically, however, the play will always have considerable importance, since it contained one of the first appeals for the literary independence of the new country. It appears in the prologue, and indeed makes up the whole of it:

*Exult each patriot heart!—this night is shewn
A piece, which we may fairly call our own;
Where the proud titles of "My Lord! Your Grace!"
To humble Mr. and plain Sir give place.
Our Author pictures not from foreign climes
The fashions, or the follies of the times;
But has confined the subject of his work
To the gay scenes—the circles of New-York.
On native themes his Muse displays her pow'rs;
If ours the faults, the virtues too are ours.
Why should our thoughts to distant countries roam,
When each refinement may be found at home?
Who travels now to ape the rich or great,
To deck an equipage and roll in state;
To court the graces, or to dance with ease,
Or by hypocrisy to strive to please?
Our free-born ancestors such arts despis'd;
Genuine sincerity alone they priz'd;*

¹ Quoted *ibid.* pp. 229-230.

² *Ibid.* p. 171.

*Their minds, with honest emulation fir'd,
To solid good—not ornament—aspir'd;
Or, if ambition rous'd a bolder flame
Stern virtue throve, where indolence was shame.*

*But modern youths, with imitative sense,
Deem taste in dress the proof of excellence;
And spurn the meanness of your homespun arts,
Since homespun habits would obscure their parts;
Whilst all, which aims at splendour and parade,
Must come from Europe, and be ready made.
Strange! we should thus our native worth disclaim,
And check the progress of our rising fame.
Yet one, whilst imitation bears the sway,
Aspires to nobler heights, and points the way,
Be rous'd, my friends! his bold example view;
Let your own Bards be proud to copy you!
Should rigid critics reprobate our play,
At least the patriotic heart will say,
"Glorious our fall, since in a noble cause.
"The bold attempt alone demands applause."
Still may the wisdom of the Comic Muse
Exalt your merits, or your faults accuse.
But think not, 'tis her aim to be severe;—
We all are mortals, and as mortals err.
If candour pleases we are truly blest;
Vice trembles, when compell'd to stand 'confess'd.
Let not light Censure on your faults, offend,
Which aims not to expose them, but amend.
Thus does our Author to your candour trust;
Conscious, the free are generous, as just.¹*

Barker's "Tears and Smiles," which was modeled after "The Contrast" was probably even more popular than it. Indeed, it was perhaps the favorite comedy of its day. The contemporary critics saw a great deal of "gleaming humor and vivacity" in it, and one of their modern successors has recently revived the legend.² Unfortu-

¹ *Op. cit.* edition of Helen Tyler Brown, great-grand-daughter of the author. N. Y. 1920. pp. 1-2.

² See Musser. Introduction.

nately, a careful reading of it does not bear out this judgment. It is full of puerile moralizing and maudlin sentimentality.

The following song from Act III represents its highest reaches of rollicking humor:

*Blithe Rosa beheld, as she sat in her 'cot,
An intruder the door open wide;
Her Edwy was absent: he knew it, he came,
'Twas Sorrow that stood by her side.
Yet she sang cheerily, get away, Sorrow!
Edwy will come ere the lark hails the morrow:
Where Edwy is, you can never be, Sorrow;
Get away, get away, Sorrow!*

*Just then Edwy enter'd, conducted by Love,
And he brought laughing Joy as his guest;
Gloomy Sorrow withdrew, all abash'd, from the place,
While the cottagers' song his flight prest.
While they sang cheerily, get away, Sorrow!
Hie to the guilty! and bid your good morrow;
But fly from the presence of Love and Joy, Sorrow!
Get away, get away, Sorrow!*

*And though oft returning for entrance he pleads,
Yet chas'd soon is Sorrow away,
When he taps at the casement, or lifts up the latch,
And his ears catch the cottagers' lay,
While they sing cheerily, get away, Sorrow!
Come not to day, demon! come not to morrow,
Virtue and Innocence know thee not, Sorrow;
Get away, get away, Sorrow!¹*

All of the plays by native Americans before 1815 have only historic interest today. They were considerably inferior to the contemporary fiction or verse, bad as these were. They left no influence whatever. As Mr. Barrett Clark has said, the playwrights of today may be the heirs of the past, but not of the past of our own native drama.² It is greatly to be doubted if O'Neill or Sidney Howard or Paul Green have ever read Dunlap or Payne or Barker or Tyler.

¹ Musser. pp. 175-176.

² Clark. p. 22.

CHAPTER XVII

Newspapers and Magazines

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*Newspapers and Magazines*¹

A. NEWSPAPERS

PARLIAMENT PASSED THE STAMP ACT ON MARCH 22, 1765. ONE of its provisions, which was to take effect on November 1 of the same year, was that newspapers were to pay a halfpenny tax for one half sheet or less, and a penny tax for anything over one half sheet "but not exceeding one whole sheet for every printed copy thereof." All advertisers were to pay a tax of two shillings. The colonial newspapers, needless to say, fought back vigorously. They disregarded the taxes completely. For a while, in place of their regular heads, they had such things as *No Stamped Paper to Be had, Recent Occurrences*, etc. "A most diligent and careful search has not revealed among the thirteen original Colonies a single newspaper which appeared on stamped paper."²

When news of the repeal of the Stamp Act reached Boston, May 16, 1766, all the rebel papers united and put out an extra under the head, *Glorious News*, which they gave away free. The leader of the group was the *Gazette*, the third of that name in Boston. It was established on April 7, 1755, and was "the pet of the patriots." It was indeed the most fiery of all the revolutionary journals. It had among its contributors such leaders of radical thought as Samuel Adams, Josiah Quincy, Jr., Joseph Warren, John Adams, Thomas Cushing, and Samuel Cooper. Paul Revere did its engravings. It generally contained news that no other paper had, and it frequently handled it with distinction. The following, for example, was its account of the Boston Tea Party:

¹ For my information in this section I rely largely on the following works: "History of American Journalism," by James Melvin Lee. Boston. 1923; "History of Journalism in the United States," by George Henry Payne. N. Y. 1920; "A History of American Magazines: 1741-1850," by Frank Luther Mott. N. Y. 1930; and "The Development of American Literature from 1815 to 1833. With Especial Reference to Periodicals," by William B. Cairns. Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin. Philology and Literature Series. Vol. I. No. 1. pp. 1-87. March, 1898. Madison, Wis.

² Lee. pp. 83-84.

On Tuesday last the body of the people of this and all adjacent towns, and others from the distance of twenty miles, assembled at the Old South Meeting-house, to inquire the reason of the delay in sending the ship *Dartmouth*, with the East-India Tea, back to London; and having found that the owner had not taken the necessary steps for that purpose, they enjoined him at his peril to demand of the collector of the customs a clearance of the ship, and appointed a committee of ten to see it performed: after which they adjourned to the Thursday following, ten o'clock. They then met, and being informed by Mr. Rotch, that a clearance was refused him, they enjoined him immediately to enter a protest and apply to the Governor for a passport by the castle, and adjourned again till three o'clock for the same day. At which time they again met, and after waiting till after sunset, Mr. Rotch came in and informed them that he had accordingly entered his protest and waited on the Governor for a pass, but his excellency told him he could not consistent with his duty grant it until his vessel was qualified. The people finding all their efforts to preserve the property of the East-India Company and return it safely to London frustrated by the tea consignees, the collector of the customs, and the Governor of the Province, DISSOLVED their meeting. — But, BEHOLD what followed! A number of brave and resolute men, determined to do all in their power to save their country from the ruin which their enemies had plotted, in less than four hours, emptied every chest of tea overboard, the three ships commanded by Captains Hull, Bruce, and Coffin, amounting to 342 chests, into the Sea! ! without the least damage done to the ships or any other property. The masters and owners are well pleased that their ships are thus cleared; and the people are almost universally congratulating each other on this happy event.¹

In marked contrast to the *Boston Gazette* was the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, published and edited by Hugh Gaine. It had two editions, one in New York City, and one in Newark. The first was Tory and the second Whig, but sometimes they would change their politics, depending upon where the British troops were causing more damage at any given time. Gaine was thus a sort of primeval William Randolph Hearst. Toward the end of his newspaper career

¹ The *Boston Gazette*. August 24, 1773.

he decided to become loyalist for good, but the Britishers would not trust him, so he blew up on November 10, 1783.

During the Revolution the rebel newspapers had to do a good deal of hopping from town to town to escape the King's soldiers. John Holt had to take his *New York Journal*, first to Kingston, and then to Poughkeepsie; Edes, for a time, was forced to publish his *Boston Gazette* in Watertown; Thomas moved his *Massachusetts Spy* from Boston to Worcester; Loudon, his *New York Packet* to Fishkill; and Dunlap, his *Pennsylvania Packet* from Philadelphia to Lancaster. The Royalist papers also had plenty to worry about: the mobs seldom gave them any rest. They would steal type, break up presses, throw mud in the windows, beat up the editor, and burn his paper stock. The most hated of the Royalist papers was James Rivington's *New York Gazeteer; or, the Connecticut, New Jersey, Hudson's River and Quebec Weekly Advertiser*, which he established in New York City on April 22, 1773. On November 27, 1777, the rebels became so incensed with his aspersions against them that they stole his type, and melted it into bullets. A bit later Rivington began business all over again with the *New York Loyal Gazette*, which became the chief organ of the New York loyalists.

In Pennsylvania the earliest rebel paper was the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, established in Philadelphia by Benjamin Towne, on January 24, 1775. After the first few issues it wobbled considerably in its politics. When the British were in Philadelphia it was with them, and when they were somewhere else it was against them. A somewhat better paper was the *Pennsylvania Journal* founded by William Bradford on December 2, 1742. It also shifted, but it was far more rebel than Tory, which was something in those days of "discreet" journalism. The most important Revolutionary sheet in Pennsylvania was the *Freeman's Journal; or the North American Intelligencer* of Philadelphia, established by Francis Bailey on April 25, 1781. Its motto was "To encourage genius, to deter vice, and disrobe tyranny and misrule of every plumage." Its reporting was quite as good as that of the *Boston Gazette*. Philip Freneau the poet contributed to it occasionally. The leading Tory paper of the same Colony was the *Pennsylvania Ledger, or the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New-Jersey Weekly Advertiser*, established in Philadelphia on January 28, 1775. Its office was burned down by the mob in November, 1776. Just before it died it had a rival in the *Royal South Carolina Gazette*, but it too was rapidly dispatched by the mob.

Editorial expression during the Revolution, with the ever glorious exception of the *Boston Gazette*, was generally very feeble. But in the matter of news reporting the papers were, on the whole, quite enterprising. When important news broke, their editors very often did not wait for the regular weekly editions, but printed it at once on handbills. Here, too, the *Boston Gazette* led them all in the number of broadsides it printed.

As for advertisements, they were, in the main, either flamboyant testimonials of the efficacy of patent medicines, or announcements of slaves to be sold. In Hugh Gainé's *Weekly Mercury* for January 25, 1768, appeared the following typical advertisement:

To be sold an excellent negro Wench about twenty years old, with a male Child about three months old; the Wench has had the Smallpox, can cook, work and iron, can be well recommended, and is sold for no other fault than being too fruitful. Enquire of H. Gainé.

There was also a tremendous number of advertisements of lotteries for almost every conceivable project. "If the advertisements were truthful, — and there is no reason to suppose they were otherwise, — lotteries equipped the libraries of our higher institutions of learning, remodeled houses of worship, put bells in the steeples of churches, repaired roads, erected bridges over rivers, and did many other things for which communities are commonly taxed."¹

As in the previous colonial era, the Revolutionary papers were printed on the hand-presses. Their circulations were very small; the average, even in flush times, was much less than 2000. But they did very well, considering all their difficulties. For one thing, there was the matter of transportation. "The post-office would not carry the papers and the post riders had to be bribed to take them along with the letters. It took six days for a letter to go from Boston to New York, or nine days in bad weather; still, when a paper arrived in a small village, nearly all the adult population gathered around the minister while he read it from start to finish."² Then there was trouble in obtaining paper stock. Some of the journals, indeed, had to suspend on this score. They all used to run advertisements for rags for the paper mills. The *Fayetville Gazette* argued that "the economical

¹ Lee. p. 94.

² Payne. pp. 138-139.

Housewife who supplies the paper mill with rags, serves her country in her sphere as well as the soldier who fights does in his.”¹

After the Revolution the loyalist papers immediately turned King haters and Republic lovers, but the rebels would not trust them, and all of them died. Another effect of Washington's victory was that the rebel sheets that had been “discreet” suddenly blossomed out as courageous supporters of the new nation. A third was that party politics came to the fore, and for the next twenty-five years the newspapers were either Republican or Federalist. As party organs they were the chief vehicles of the political debating of the time. The best information about the struggle over the ratification of the Federal Constitution is thus to be obtained in them. As is well known, “The Federalist” originally appeared in installments in the New York *Independent Journal*. Because of the fervid party spirit then prevailing, and because libel laws had not been enacted as yet, the current newspaper manners were somewhat less than gentlemanly. “At a political meeting it was considered quite proper to pass a resolution calling upon ‘our party newspapers to attack at once the reputations of all the leading Federalists in the State,’ or *vice versa*, for most papers were either Federal or Republican.”² The two chief purveyors of libel at the time were Freneau's *National Gazette* and Bache's *General Advertiser*, both of Philadelphia. The latter printed the following editorial comment on Washington, disguised as correspondence, on March 6, 1797, two days after his retirement from the presidency:

“Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,” was the pious ejaculation of a man who beheld a flood of happiness rushing in upon mankind—If ever there was a time that would license the reiteration of the exclamation that time is now arrived; for the man who is the source of all the misfortunes of our country, is this day reduced to a level with his fellow-citizens, and is no longer possessed of power to multiply evils upon the United States—If ever there was a period for rejoicing this is the moment—every heart in unison with the freedom and happiness of the people ought to beat high with exultation, that the name of Washington from this day ceases to give a currency to political iniquity, and to legalize corruption—a new era is now opening up upon us, an

¹ Quoted by Lee. p. 97.

² *Ibid.* p. 101.

era which promises much to the people; for public measures must now stand upon their own merits, and nefarious projects can no longer be supported by a name: when a retrospect is taken of the Washingtonian administration for eight years, it is a subject of the greatest astonishment that a single individual should have cankered the principles of republicanism in an enlightened people, just emerged from the gulf of despotism, and should have carried his designs against the public liberty so far as to have put in jeopardy its very existence—Such, however, are the facts, and with these staring us in the face, this day ought to be a Jubilee in the United States.

To stop such stuff the Alien and Sedition Laws were passed by Congress in 1798, but that did not stop the papers from printing similar things about John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and other men of equal prominence. Thus there were many libel suits, and the lawyers had good business.

About the turn of the century an important change took place in American journalism. In the earlier period the editor was almost invariably a practical printer who supplemented his income by job-printing, auctioneering, etc. The stuff he printed was usually contributed by other hands. But now, about 1800, the editor came into his own. "Communications from other pens were welcomed, but they were no longer given first place in the paper."¹ The editor was usually a party man high in the favor of the ins or outs, and he knew precisely what to say.

In 1800 there were only eleven cities in the United States with a population of more than 5000. Of these only two had more than 50,000: Philadelphia (70,000) and New York (60,000). Baltimore, Boston, and Charleston had between 20 and 30,000; Providence, Savannah, and Norfolk, between 5 and 10,000; and Portsmouth, N. H., Albany, and Richmond, just over 5000. The total population of the country was 5,000,000. The city and town population was thus less than 5% of the total. Hence the newspapers were still largely agricultural. When Philadelphia was the seat of the Federal government its journals, naturally, were the most influential; and when Washington became the capital the New York papers took their place.

The first daily in the United States was the *Pennsylvania Packet*

¹ Lee. p. 106.

and *Daily Advertiser* of Philadelphia, which first appeared on September 21, 1784. About four-fifths of the first issue was made up of advertisements, and the rest was ship news, meteorological news, and an essay entitled "The Error of the Press," reprinted from the London *Public Advertiser*. The second daily was the outgrowth of the weekly *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*. The daily edition first appeared on December 1, 1784. The third daily was the New York *Daily Advertiser*, first published March 1, 1785. In Boston the first daily was the *Polar Star and Boston Daily Advertiser*, which saw the light on October 6, 1796.

The two Philadelphia dailies were by far the most important in the country. The *Gazette of the United States*, edited by John Fenno, was the political organ of Hamilton; and the *National Gazette*, edited by Philip Freneau, was the organ of Jefferson. They were both fiery party papers, and contained little else beside politics. The following editorial by Freneau on the secrecy of the Senate appeared in the *National Gazette* for February 25, 1792:

A motion for opening the doors of the senate chamber has again lost by a considerable majority—in defiance of instruction, in defiance of your opinion, in defiance of every principle which gives security to free men. What means this conduct? Which expression does it carry strongest with it, contempt for you or tyranny? Are you freemen who ought to know the individual conduct of your legislators, or are you an inferior order of beings incapable of comprehending the sublimity of senatorial functions, and unworthy to be entrusted with their opinions? How are you to know the just from the unjust steward when they are covered with the mantle of concealment? Can there be any question of legislative import which freemen should not be acquainted with? What are you to expect when stewards of your household refuse to give account of their stewardship? Secrecy is necessary to design and a masque to treachery; honesty shrinks not from the public eye.

The Peers of America disdain to be seen by vulgar eyes, the music of their voices is harmony only for themselves and must not vibrate in the ravished ear of an ungrateful and unworthy multitude. Is there any congeniality excepting in the administration, between the government of Great Britain and the government of the United States? The Senate supposes there is, and

usurps the secret privileges of the House of Lords. Remember, my fellow citizens, that you are still freemen; let it be impressed upon your minds that you depend not upon your representatives but that they depend upon you, and let this truth be ever present to you, that secrecy in your representatives is a worm which will prey and fatten upon the vitals of your liberty.

The most interesting, and at the same time the most conservative, of the early New England political papers was the *Massachusetts Centinel and Republican Journal*, founded by Benjamin Russell on March 24, 1784. He was perhaps one of the most able newspaper men of his day. He was the first to use, on a large scale, such features as pictures, cartoons, allegories, etc. A sample of his allegorical writing, which was very popular with his readers, is the one he wrote immediately after the inauguration of Washington in 1789. It follows:

Just *launched* on the *Ocean of Empire*, the Ship COLUMBIA, GEORGE WASHINGTON, Commander, which, after being thirteen years in *dock*, is at length well *manned*, and in very good condition. The Ship is a *first rate* — has a good *bottom*, which all the Builders have pronounced *sound* and *good*. Some objection has been made to parts of the *tackling*, or *running rigging*, which, it is supposed, will be *altered*, when they shall be found to be *incommodious*, as the Ship is able to make very good *headway* with them as they are. A *jury* of *Carpenters* have this matter now under consideration. The *Captain* and *First Mate* are universally esteemed by all the Owners, — Eleven¹ in Number — and she has been *insured*, under their direction, to make a good *mooring* in the *harbor* of Public Prosperity and Felicity — whitherto she is bound. The Owners can furnish, besides the Ship's Company, the following materials: — *New-Hampshire* the Masts and Spars; *Massachusetts*, Timber for the Hull, Fish, &c.; *Connecticut*, Beef and Pork; *New-York*, Porter and other Cabin stores; *New-Jersey*, the Cordage; *Pennsylvania*, Flour and Bread; — *Dela-ware*, the Colors, and Clothing for the Crew; *Maryland*, the Iron work and small Anchors; *Virginia*, Tobacco and the Sheet Anchor; *South-Carolina*, Rice; and *Georgia*, Powder and small Provisions. Thus found, may this *good Ship* put to sea, and the

¹ Rhode Island and North Carolina had not yet ratified the Constitution when this was written.

prayer of all is, that GOD *may preserve her, and bring her in safety to her desired haven.*

The first newspaper column was "From the Shop of Messrs. Colon and Spondee," by Royall Tyler the dramatist, in the *New Hampshire Journal*, published at Walpole, N. H., and founded by Isaiah Thomas, publisher of the Worcester, Mass., *Spy*, and David Carlisle of Walpole. Other features by other writers were "The Rural Wanderer," "The Medler," "Peter Pencil," and "The Hermit." But the most attractive department of all was "The Lay Preacher," by Joseph Dennie, which has already been discussed on a previous page. For a while the *New Hampshire Journal* was the most popular paper in the New World.

New York had two important Federal papers: the *Minerva*, established December 9, 1793, and for the first six years of its life edited by Noah Webster¹ the lexicographer; and the *Evening Post*, founded on November 16, 1801. The *Minerva* was a very sedate political sheet. The editor of the *Evening Post*, William Coleman, was called "the field-marshal of the Federal Party." Both papers, like their contemporaries, were really hardly more than political pamphlets. They ran little domestic news, and all their foreign news was made up of clippings from the London press or gossip by returning travelers. Occasionally they ran features for the ladies, supplemented by editorial advice. In the *Evening Post* for May 18, 1802, appeared the following weighty meditations on female dress:

Female dress of the modern Parisian cut, however deficient in point of the ornament vulgarly called clothing, must at least be allowed to be not entirely without its advantages. If there is danger of its making the gentlemen too prompt to advance, let it not be unobserved that it fits the lady to escape. Unlike the dull drapery of petticoats worn some years since, but now banished to the nursery or kitchen, the present light substitute gives an air of celerity which seems to say — Catch me if you can.

In 1815 there were about 400 newspapers in the United States, weekly and daily. As has been said, they were hardly newspapers at all, but somewhat elongated pamphlets. The man who wanted to get

¹ At the time he was still at work on his monumental "American Dictionary of the English Language." It was published in 1828.

the news of the day had to go to the tavern to gather it from the gossip or from the handbills. The newspapers gave him mainly opinion, but we must not forget that it was the opinion of the Founders of the Republic, the opinion that shaped the nation.

B. MAGAZINES

The magazine business in the United States in Revolutionary days, and indeed for at least sixty years thereafter, was very bad, even worse than the newspaper business. The people simply were not interested in magazines. Noah Webster, in his *American Magazine* for February, 1788, said, significantly enough, "The expectation of failure is connected with the very name of a magazine." Their circulations were extremely small; the average was about 300. The *Pennsylvania Magazine*, in its palmy days, when Tom Paine was editor, reached 1500. That was a miracle. "It is doubtful if any magazine in Eighteenth Century America surpassed that figure. . . . It is extremely doubtful if the aggregate number of copies of magazines circulated in America reached 5000 at any one time in the Eighteenth Century."¹

Most of the contents of early magazines were reprinted from books, newspapers, and London periodicals. The editors had great difficulty in getting contributors. "Calls for contributions were so frequent that the ingenuity of the editor was taxed to devise new wordings. Gentlemen whose early opportunities had been neglected were urged to send in their productions with the assurance that details of spelling and grammar would be attended to in the office."² Isaiah Thomas of the *Royal American Magazine* actually begged for contributors to favor him "with their lucubrations."³ The plain fact was that "there was no writing class, and it was difficult to persuade professional and business men to take time from their leisure hours for writing."⁴ Indeed, it continued to be so till well into the Nineteenth Century. William Tudor, the first editor of the *North American Review*, had to write the whole of his first number himself, with the exception of one poem.

Why then did the editors persist in putting out their magazines, and in starting new ones as soon as the old ones died? Largely, it

¹ Mott. p. 14.

² Cairns. p. 40.

³ *Op. cit.* February, 1774.

⁴ Mott. p. 14.

appears, to show the supercilious English that America could be as cultured when separated from Great Britain as when united with it. Hugh Henry Brackenridge said in the very first number of the *United States Magazine*, December, 1779 :

It was the language of our enemies at the commencement of the debate between America and what is called the mother-country, that in righteous judgment for our wickedness, it would be well to leave us to that independency which we seemed to affect, and to suffer us to sink down to so many Ouran-Outans of the wood, lost to the light of science which, from the other side of the Atlantic, had just begun to break upon us. They have been made to see, and even to confess the vanity of this kind of *auguration*. The British officers who are, some of them, men of understanding, on perusal of our pamphlets in the course of the debate, and the essays and dissertations in the news-papers, have been forced to acknowledge, not without chagrin, that the rebels, as they are pleased to call us, had some *d-mn'd* good writers on their side of the question, and that we had fought them no less successfully with the pen than with the sword. We hope to convince them yet more fully, that we are able to cultivate the *belles lettres*, even disconnected with Great-Britain; and that liberty is of so noble and energetic a quality, as even from the bosom of a war to call forth the powers of human genius, in every course of literary fame and improvement.

The first magazine in the Colonies was Andrew Bradford's *American Magazine, or, A Monthly View of the Political State of the British Colonies*, which appeared on February 13, 1741. Three days later appeared Benjamin Franklin's *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle, For all the British Plantations in America*. Bradford's magazine lasted three months, and Franklin's six months. The contents of both of them were made up entirely of meteorological news, generally worthless, and state papers. About the same time there appeared in Boston the *Weekly Magazine*, which lived precisely three numbers, March 2, 9, and 16, 1743. In January, 1774, Isaiah Thomas, the enterprising publisher, started the *Royal American Magazine*. It lasted fifteen months. In January, 1775, appeared the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, with Tom Paine as editor. Four years later the *United States Magazine* came into being, with Hugh Henry Brackenridge as editor.

The latter two were probably the best magazines in American history prior to the *North American Review*. They ran excellent political articles, verse that was as good as was to be had at the time, and occasional fiction.

After the Revolution there was a considerable increase in the number of magazines. Perhaps the most important transitional periodical was the *Boston Magazine*, which kept up from 1783 to 1786. It was edited by John Eliot, James Freeman, and George Minot, and had for its subtitle: "A Collection of Instructive and Entertaining Essays, in the Various Branches of Useful, and Polite Literature, together with Foreign and Domestic Occurrences, Anecdotes, Observations on the Weather, &c, &c." It was the *Atlantic Monthly* of those primitive days.

Half of the magazines up to the year 1794 were published in the preceding eight years. Before then there were never more than three printed in America at once. But in 1786 there were six magazines going at the same time, and a bit later there were seven. The most important of this period were the *Columbian Magazine* and the *American Museum*, both of Philadelphia; the *Massachusetts Magazine* of Boston; and the *New York Magazine*. The contents of them all was mainly political. The *American Museum*, edited by Mathew Carey, was perhaps the best of the lot. It lived from 1787 to 1792.

Philadelphia and Boston were the magazine centres of America before 1815. They each had twelve magazines. There was no magazine south of Philadelphia before 1793, when the *Free Universal Magazine* of Baltimore appeared; and there was only one south of Baltimore in the Eighteenth Century: the *South Carolina Weekly Museum* (1797-1798), published at Charleston.

The format of the American magazines was very much like that of their English contemporaries. They generally contained sixty-four octavo pages, and were about six by eight inches. The covers were made of brittle color stock, and nearly all of them had woodcuts on their title pages. A few had copperplate engravings. As for the contents, when they were not reprints from the London and American newspapers, they were essays, short fiction, verse, and advice to the ladies about their complexion, dress, etc. One of their commonest features was what was called "fragments." A sample follows. It is from the *Massachusetts Magazine* for January, 1793.

Lucilla:—A Fragment

The conscious blush crimsoned her countenance—She started as she saw me. Lucilla, said I—sir, returned the unhappy fair.—Alas! I knew thee in better days—thy voice was music to the ear—thy wit, the theme of every tongue. How is thine aspect altered! The sparkling eye hath lost its fires—the roses are faded—the lilly is a sallow pale.—What mighty misfortunes have destroyed thee? Where is the cruel invader of thy peace? She sighed bitterly—the reply was candid like herself.—The attentions of Altamont you well know—He came from a distant state, and bare me triumphant from all his compeers. A few months possession sickened on his soul. Perdita spread the snare of destruction—Altamont entered her toils, and has left me to weep.

Deprest by too much sensibility of feeling, sorrow hath been drowned in factious spirits—I have not the fortitude to resist—Pity, Oh pity me. My friends—Yes! tenderest pity shall be thine. I know thy parents, Lucilla, they shall forgive the errors of humanity, and clasp the returned prodigal to their bosoms. A gleam of joy illumined her features—it was transient as the colors of the bow. The remembrance of home was a dagger—it pointed to the heart.—Lucilla fainted—she awoke not again.—Peace be to thy soul—the dust shall lay light on thy errors—the tombstone record, that virtues, yes! many, were the inmates of the once virtuous Lucilla.

Once in a great while there was an attempt at literary or dramatic criticism. The following is what the New York correspondent of the *Worcester Magazine* had to say about the first performance of Royall Tyler's "The Contrast":

On Monday evening last, for the first, and last evening for the second time, was performed at the theatre in this city, amid continuous roars of applause, a COMEDY (composed by an American) called the CONTRAST. . . . An American comick production, is a novelty—there it was pleasing . . . this is not the whole truth—the piece has merit, and it will not be denied, that *merit* with *novelty*, forces applause, whereas *novelty* without

merit, simply attains it. . . . It may be said that many subjects might have better occupied the leisure hours of the author—but when the publick are informed, that he just left the active field of MARS, where he aided the rescuing of the invaluable constitution of Massachusetts, from its audacious invaders, *the rebels of Massachusetts*—and was in this city, on business that could not occupy his whole time, they cannot but be grateful that he sacrificed a part of it, in adding to their rational amusements.¹

The following is a sample of the advice given to the ladies. It is from Noah Webster's *American Magazine* for March, 1788.

To be *lovely* you must be content to be *women*; to be mild, social and sentimental—to be acquainted with all that belongs to your department—and leave the masculine virtues, and the profound researches of study to the province of the other sex.

In 1795 the weeklies came to the fore. Three of them were founded in that year: the Philadelphia *Minerva*, the Boston *Tablet*, and the New York *Weekly Magazine*, later rechristened the *Sentimental and Literary Magazine*. Perhaps the most readable of them all was the *Tablet*, to which Joseph Dennie contributed. In contents they were all similar to the monthlies that preceded them. The most important of all those founded about this time was the Philadelphia *Port Folio*, established in 1801. Joseph Dennie was its editor from its founding till his death in 1812.² He contributed heavily to it, and so did Joseph Hopkinson, author of "Hail Columbia!"; Richard Bush, later minister to England; John Quincy Adams, Charles Brockden Brown, Joseph Blair Linn the poet, Charles Jared Ingersoll the dramatist, Alexander Wilson the ornithologist, and Gouverneur Morris. For a time the *Port Folio* was the most powerful political weekly in the United States, but after Dennie's death it slumped, and finally expired in 1825.

Charles Brockden Brown the novelist was another important magazine editor of the time. At one time or another he had under his charge the following: the *Monthly Magazine and American Review* (New

¹ Quoted by Mott. p. 55.

² A fuller discussion of his contributions to it appears in a previous section of the present volume.

York, 1799), the quarterly *American Review and Literary Journal* (New York, 1801), and the monthly *Literary Magazine and American Register* (Philadelphia, 1803-1804). The only literary things that appeared in them which are of any interest today were the serializations of his novels. From a financial point of view all of Brown's magazines were failures. In 1803 the Boston *Monthly Anthology* began business. It was sponsored by the Anthology Club of the same town, which was a precursor of the Saturday Night Club of the New England Golden Age. It died in 1811.

Nearly every town of any size in America had a weekly or monthly between 1790 and 1815. They lived an average of six months and then died. They contained nothing distinguished or memorable. In the main they were third-rate versions of their newspaper contemporaries. It is very easy to understand why the people did not patronize them: they found much better and more timely stuff in the newspapers. The latter, despite all their deficiencies, served a definite purpose: they were the mouthpieces of the political theorists of the constitutional era. The magazines served no purpose at all. But this was not to be for long. With the founding of the *North American Review* in 1815, they supplanted the newspapers in importance, and indeed became the vehicles of the first really distinguished literature of the Republic.

CHAPTER XVIII

Conclusion

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THE PERIOD COVERED IN THE PRESENT VOLUME, 1750-1815, was the great political era in the history of the United States, as that dealt with in Volume One was the great theological era. It produced a line of political pamphleteers and theorists that the Republic may well be proud of: John Adams, Samuel Adams, Jonathan Mayhew, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Thomas Paine. They were learned in the ways of the governments of the past, they were imbued with a genuine love of country, and they had courage. But, it must be added, they were not original thinkers, in the sense in which Pufendorf and Montesquieu were original thinkers. The ideas that moved them most powerfully they borrowed from Locke and Rousseau and the author of "*Elementa Jurisprudentiæ Universalis*." The government they built upon them has flourished until today it is the greatest empire in the world, and it has been imitated by more countries than perhaps any other in human history. But it has not presented the world with new political ideas; it has presented only new forms of ancient political troubles. Originality, perhaps, is not the greatest of all the virtues of the mind, but it is surely one of the most desirable ones.

If the Founding Fathers were not original political thinkers they were great personalities. The lives of the Adamses and of Jefferson and of Paine were grand lives. There was a massive dignity about them that will perhaps command the admiration of the world for centuries to come. The revolution they engineered was truly one of the most romantic events in history. The more one studies it the longer does one stop to revere them.

Unfortunately, the literature produced in the same period does not measure up to its men. The poetry continued to be as mediocre as that in the preceding century. The Hartford Wits were more pretentious than the colonial jinglers of Massachusetts, but they were not much more gifted. The same was true of the few pathetic attempts made at the novel. The works of Brackenridge and Charles Brockden Brown are dead forever.

Why there was such a dearth of *belles lettres* it is not very easy to understand. There were subjects aplenty, and of the kind that writers usually dare only dream about. And the opportunities for writing were on every hand; editors, as has been pointed out, were actually begging for contributions. But all they got were moral and sentimental fragments. The Colonies, to be sure, were undergoing a terrific political experience, and long after the Revolution remained disunited. But what have such things to do with the production of literature? What of Greece in the Periclean Age? What of England in the furious days of Cromwell? What of ancient Jerusalem in King David's days?

Distinguished and truly indigenous literature in America came later. As the nation extended its boundaries to the West and the South, it developed in quality to the East. With the growth of the national consciousness there appeared, somehow or other, a national culture, including a national literature. At last, in 1815, the *North American Review* opened shop, and two years later came "Thanatopsis," the first great poem in our annals, and American literature was born.

A Literary History of the American People

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